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EDUCATION
FOR A NEW SOCIETY

EDUCATION FOR A NEW SOCIETY

By

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LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD.

BROADWAY HOUSE : 68–74 CARTER LANE, E.C.

First Edition . . *May* 1942
Reprinted . . . *September* 1942
Reprinted . . . *April* 1943
Revised and rewritten 1947

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PREFACE

"EDUCATION FOR A NEW SOCIETY" is not a new book. It is the fourth edition of a book which was first published in 1942, now very much revised and somewhat extended. The original edition propounded both a philosophy of education and a plan. The philosophy has yet to be realised; the plan has, in its main essentials, been embodied in the machinery of the Education Act of 1944.

It would be presumptious to claim that there was anything in the plan which was not in the accepted programme of all progressive bodies and the stock-in-trade of educational reformers, long in the field, before the author of this volume had learned to thread his way through the maze of educational terminology. All that the author would dare to claim is that he may have succeeded, to some degree, in the task to which he first aspired, which was to present educational terminology in language which would be understood by the ordinary man, and to that extent enlarge the volume of public support for the reforms now embodied in the Act of 1944.

If the earlier editions of this book made a modest contribution to "making education attractive to the ordinary man," or a larger circle within that wide definition, the *fourth* edition should be a reminder that we have only laid the foundation of the edifice we desire to build. The nation's childhood claims no privilege. It asks only to enter into its rightful inheritance. To give or deny those rights is in our hands.

This book is dedicated, therefore, to the "common man," because it is his enthusiasm for education and his

understanding of its social significance which will determine with what speed we can produce an educational environment to provide for every child the opportunity for the full development of his physical, mental and spiritual powers.

EDUCATION FOR A NEW SOCIETY

Chapter I

THE HISTORY OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the purpose of education, there is general agreement that it influences the behaviour and character of the individual and affects the economic and social life of the community. The extent to which it can do so has been determined by the authorities who have controlled educational policy and provision, at one time the Church and from the beginning of the twentieth century both the Church and the State.

When, therefore, we are disposed to deplore the rather scanty return obtained from our educational expenditure and the almost universal apathy toward education, we might discover an explanation in the meagre fare on which the masses were expected to grow enthusiastic.

Whatever defects may be inherent in the modern education system are due, less to the failures of successive governments to assume responsibility for educational reform than to powerful interests inside and outside Parliament who, time after time, have thwarted both government measures and private bills, some of which were destined to mark epochs in educational progress. The reader must judge for him or herself whether the history of our educational development supports this charge.

The Children and Young Persons Act (1933) insists that the magistrate in the juvenile court must be concerned only with "the welfare of the child". If this

had been the criterion for measuring the value of proposals for educational reform, especially in the nineteenth century, sectarian differences would not have been allowed to prejudice educational progress and many of the anomalies we have yet to abolish would never have arisen.

We are not suggesting that the governments of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were so benevolently inclined toward the education of the common people that, but for the opposition of contending factions and vested interests, the country would have been inundated with educational reforms. Governments seldom take the initiative in reform of any kind, least of all in education. It needed a good deal of pressure from inside and outside Parliament to obtain the first State grant for elementary education—a grant of £20,000 on August 17th, 1833, being voted to "aid private subscriptions to erect school houses for the children of the poorer classes." This munificent gesture of benevolence was not prompted by any desire for State intervention in education. The Government of 1833 and successive governments for many years later were convinced that voluntary organisations and private enterprise could, between them, provide all the education necessary for the children of the poorer classes.

It would be grossly uncharitable not to recognise that there would have been practically no educational provision but for the National Society for Educating the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, formed in 1811, the British and Foreign Schools Society, established in 1814, and the charity schools, first organised under the guidance of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.), founded in 1698. No differences of opinion in the controversy on the dual system of control in modern education should blind us to the fact

that, if religious denominations claimed a voice in the control of education they did at least establish their claim at a time when the State showed no concern whatever.

When the nineteenth century opened, the provision of anything approaching an organised education system could only have been an ironical insult to children taken from the workhouses in batches and "apprenticed" to mill and factory owners to work the best part of the clock round at an age when most of them had just cut their second teeth. How ironical any serious educational provision would have been may be judged from the fact that in 1802 Parliament passed the *Health and Morals Act*, limiting the working hours of children to twelve per day and abolishing night work. The Act provided for instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic, and for compulsory attendance at Church on Sundays. Although claimed as the first Factory Act, it did not provide for the appointment of inspectors. The duty of inspection was left to the nearest magistrate or clergyman, and as the former might be a factory owner himself and the latter disinterested, it is not surprising that the Act was extensively ignored. Against such a background of demoralising industrial conditions it is easy to understand the atmosphere of moral uplift and piety which dominated the educational ideas of the philanthropists and religious organisations of the nineteenth century. The emphasis on moral and religious instruction at that time was not wholly due to the desire to proselytise. There was the genuine recognition that the evil effects of pitiably long hours of work, the abominable sweating of child labour, the shocking housing conditions and the almost universal illiteracy, had inevitably produced what it had sown, a harvest of moral depravity.

We stress this because we do not desire to do an injustice to the denominationalists who, from the first, insisted upon sectarian education, an insistence which may have had more justification, if considered in relation to the moral factors which faced the religious bodies in the nineteenth century, however little justification it may have today.

To the Church, education, if not too liberally supplied, appeared to be the antidote to the growing political agitation, the cure for the dissolute habits of the poor and the medium for the redemption of their souls. There were no lack of advocates of education, within limits, for the "lower orders", and these advocates were remarkably unanimous in claiming that its chief value would be to ensure submission and meekness. Arthur Young, in his *Inquiry into State of Mind of the Lower Classes* (1798), supported education as the medium for "learning the doctrine of that truly excellent religion which exhorts to content and submission to the higher powers."

A generation later Dickens showed that this attitude still prevailed and formed the philosophy of the manufacturing class as represented by Mr. Dombey, in *Dombey and Son*. It will be recalled that Mr. Dombey, impelled to show some little generosity to the woman, Mrs. Richards, who had fulfilled the essential maternal functions to his motherless child, Paul, summoned her into his presence and after pompously reproving her by disclosing that after talking to her husband he was convinced that she and her whole family were "sunk and steeped in ignorance", further informed her that he was

> far from being friendly to what is called, by persons of levelling sentiments, general education. But it is necessary that the inferior classes should continue to be taught to know their position and to conduct themselves properly. . . . So far, I approve of schools.

In furtherance of this approval, Mr. Dombey had nominated Mrs. Richards' eldest son to a vacancy at a charity school, "the Charitable Grinders", where "not only is a wholesome education bestowed upon the scholars, but where a dress and a badge is likewise provided for them". "The number of her son, I believe," said Mr. Dombey, turning to his sister and speaking of the child as if he were a hackney coach, "is one hundred and forty-seven."

A clause in the articles of one charity school, typical of all, said :

> The children shall wear their cap bands, clothes and other marks of distinction, everyday, whereby the trustees and benefactors may know them and see what their behaviour is abroad.[1]

Doubtless Mr. Dombey well represented the class who recognised that an ignorant population was bound to be thriftless, a thriftless population would be expensive and might even be dangerous. Thus one philanthropic organisation, passably progressive as the nineteenth century goes, had the honest candour to claim a deep interest in the morals of the poor on the grounds that

> as in every country they are numerous and a threat to our personal security, we are obliged on innumerable occasions to trust them with our property and, what is more, the minds of our children may be influenced by the good or bad qualities of the servants in whose care they spend so much of their time. The higher ranks are thus deeply interested in providing a moral and religious education for the whole of the poor. As these are enabled to rise in the scale of civilisation they will feel more repugnance to the degradation of parish relief and the enormous sums extracted from the industrious part of the community will be saved.[2]

[1]Victor Cohen, *The Nineteenth Century*.
[2]Adult Education Committee Final Report, 1919.

Even this frank appeal to self-interest was not wholly convincing to those who bitterly opposed any extension of education to the "lower orders". Twenty-four years after Arthur Young had advocated limited opportunities, if only to enable the poorer classes "to read the Word of God", it was argued by a clerical critic that education would give "the lower classes the absurd notion that they were on a footing with their superiors in respect of their rights to mental improvement; it would be dangerous to the public peace as the projects of certain revolutionary maniacs who teach the people that the convenience of man and not the Will of God has consigned them to labour and privation".[1]

Thus between the religious denominations willing to provide limited opportunities with a strong sectarian bias; those who desired to restrict instruction to reading only, those who thought the safety of the realm depended upon keeping the poor in ignorance and those who, like John Stuart Mill and Francis Place, strongly opposed any form of sectarian instruction and fought consistently for secular education, the education of the majority of the children was completely neglected.

The *Health and Morals Act* (1802), to which we have already briefly referred, was limited to protecting the health and morals of pauper children. In introducing the Bill, Sir Robert Peel intimated that he, himself, employed nearly a thousand children of this description. He claimed that his other pursuits prevented him from visiting the factories as often as he would wish, but when he did so he

was struck with the uniform appearance of bad health and, in many cases, stunted growth of the children. The hours of labour were regulated by the overseer whose remuneration depended upon the quantity of work done, he was

[1] Rev. J. Twist, *The Policy of Educating the Poor.*

> often induced to make the children work excessive hours and to stop their complaints by trifling bribes.[1]

Whatever good intentions may have prompted the Bill it remained a dead letter. No legislative steps had been taken to deal with the education of the children of the country as a whole until 1807, when Mr. Whitbread introduced a bill in Parliament which deserved to come down to posterity as the "five bob a nob" bill. Whitbread was an admirer and supporter of Lancaster's monitorial system, under which monitors were trained to teach younger pupils. The main object of the system was cheapness, and in introducing his bill, Whitbread quoted evidence in support of his case that under Lancaster's plan the cost of "education" per child need not exceed 5*s*. per year.

Dr. Andrew Bell, a Church clergyman, had adopted the system. He had been superintendent of a male orphanage in Madras and for many years a bitter dispute waged whether Bell or Lancaster was the original author of the monitorial system.

Joseph Lancaster, a Quaker, was the son of a poor nonconformist cane-sieve maker. Joseph, himself, was a charity school boy who, at twenty years of age, opened a school in Southwark and maintained it with funds zealously begged from the Quakers. It was in this one-roomed school that he commenced experimenting with the monitorial system. It was so successful that the nonconformist and social reformers responded with enthusiasm, and on this foundation the Lancasterian Association, later to become the British and Foreign Schools Society, was formed. Its educational policy included religious teaching of an undenominational character. This was not meat strong enough for the Church parties who, while supporting the monitorial

[1] Podmore, *Robert Owen*.

system, insisted upon Dr. Bell's more rigidly sectarian emphasis and provided this through the National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church.

Thus a controversy was born which has lasted for more than a century, a controversy which did not centre round the advisability or otherwise of teaching religion in the schools, but whether the children should or should not be indoctrinated with specific religious creeds.

Lancaster had a monitor in charge of each group of ten children. Lancaster taught the monitors and the monitors were supposed to teach the children. One monitor, a former pupil in Lancaster's school, has left a description of the scene on record. He says :

> Round the room were six or seven hundred boys in little drafts singing " L—E—A—P, leap, to jump." The babel was such that I remember on one occasion trying if I should be heard singing " Black-eye'd Susan." I sang and no one noticed me. I was monitor of " order " at the time.[1]

Rewards and punishments were the incentives to good behaviour, the rewards being tickets which could be exchanged for trumpery toys, and the punishments often of a brutal and degrading character.

Whitbread's Bill proposed to provide a modest two years' free education, limited to the three R's—reading, writing and arithmetic. He advocated the monitorial system, but even this two years' course at a total cost of 10*s*. for the whole period was violently opposed. Outside Parliament no one worried, except those who were opposed to the Bill, and they petitioned against it. In spite of this opposition, Whitbread forced Parliament to discuss the education of " the lower orders " for the first time. He used the familiar argument that " if the

[1] Victor Cohen, *The Nineteenth Century*.

school does not educate the gutter will", and the House of Commons passed the Bill, probably with the full knowledge that it would be decapitated, as it was, by the House of Lords. Its rejection was moved by the then Archbishop of Canterbury and it received exactly two votes. The hostility of the noble lords was based entirely upon fear than an intelligent working-class would be both seditious and dangerous. Giddy, the President of the Royal Society and a noted scientist, said in the course of the debate in the Commons that education

> instead of teaching them subordination would render them fractious and refractory ; it would enable them to read seditious pamphlets, vicious books and publications against Christianity ; it would render them insolent to their superiors and in a few years the result would be that the legislature would find it necessary to direct the strong arm of power toward them and to furnish the executive magistrate with much more vigorous laws than were now in force.[1]

Whitbread died in 1815. His effort discouraged any further attempt to secure State intervention until 1816, when Lord Brougham persuaded Parliament to set up a Committee "to enquire into the education of the lower orders". Two years later the Committee reported : It favoured rate-aided parochial schools and recommended building grants. On the basis of this report Brougham introduced a Bill in 1820. This was a more comprehensive measure than Whitbread's.

The local manufacturers were to contribute toward the building of schools and the rates to the cost of maintaining them. The schoolmaster was to be appointed by the Church authorities at salaries ranging from £20 to £30 per annum, with a house. The curriculum of the school was a matter for the clergy.

[1] J. L. Hammond, *The Town Labourer*.

Opposition came from all sides. From the manufacturers who were opposed to the proposed tax on their own financial resources, from the nonconformists who objected to the Church being placed in a privileged position, and from the Church because the Bill proposed that part of the expenditure on schools should be met from income from educational endowments. Although the Bill passed its second reading it had to be withdrawn.

Lord Brougham had been much influenced by Robert Owen, to whom both the Co-operative Movement and the British Socialist Movement owe so much for their early inspiration. Owen's own schooling finished at ten years of age. He had given liberal financial support to Lancaster and later offered a thousand pounds to the Church schools if they would open their schools to all without distinction of creed and five hundred pounds if they refused this condition. After some discussion they accepted the smaller sum.[1]

In 1816, the same year in which Brougham moved for his select committee, Owen commenced his famous experiment with the school for the children employed at his mills in Lanark. By the time Brougham introduced his 1820 Bill, Owen's school was attracting great attention. Brougham had, himself, visited the school and had been impressed by the educational theories which Owen incessantly propounded by speech, pamphlet and by example. This is not the place to discuss the Owenite theories on the place of environment and training, in moulding human character. Francis Place, who read and, it is said, corrected the manuscript of Owen's *Essays*, was impatient of Owen's dogmatism on this subject and says :

> Mr. Owen was then, and is still, persuaded that he was the first who had ever observed that man was the creature

[1] Podmore, *Robert Owen.*

> of circumstances. On this supposed discovery he founded his system. Never having read a metaphysical book, nor having heard of the disputes respecting free will and necessity, he had no clear conception of his subject and his views were obscure.[1]

On the whole, however, Owen's educational philosophy was sound. He strongly pleaded for a national system of unsectarian education. He advocated a Department of Education with power to establish training colleges, to build schools, to draft curricula, and to appoint teachers. He laid great stress on equality of opportunity and upon the development of personality. Owen believed in education from infancy, and in his own school at Lanark all children above one year old were, subject to parental consent, to be admitted. Children up to 10 years of age were day pupils and over 10 attended in the evening. Owen was one of the few factory owners who employed no children under 10 years of age. The hours of work for children in Owen's factory had been eleven and three-quarters per day, but from January 1816 these were reduced to ten and three-quarters. In that year the register contained the names of 145 boys and 129 girls, and the evening registers, 174 boys and 311 girls, a total of 759. The average attendance was 622.

Owen's experiment in education inspired the growing working-class movements, rather than the Parliamentarians, in spite of the fact that he directed most of his pamphleteering to those in high places. Both his example and his teaching, however, were, a few years later, to find a ready response among the leaders of the Co-operative, the Chartist and the Trade Union Movements.

The first public education grant of £20,000 in 1833, insignificant though it was, had established the principle

[1] Graham Wallas, *Life of Francis Place*.

of State recognition, and from that period a new spirit was abroad. It may be remarked, in passing, that the same Parliament in the same year had granted £50,000 to improve the royal stables! There were now few working-class programmes which did not demand an extension of popular education and claim, as a right, what had hitherto been regarded as a privilege. In this, the workers had eloquent support of men like Carlyle, Ruskin, Bentham, Dickens, John Stuart Mill, William Lovett and John Roebuck.

The State grant had been renewed each year up to 1839, when it was increased by a majority of two votes to £30,000.

Brougham had made three abortive attempts to interest the House in a national system of education, one in 1835 and the other in 1837, and a third in 1838. In 1837 another Select Committee had been appointed to report on the best means of providing education for the children of the poorer classes in the large towns. This Committee reported in 1838. It claimed that in large towns one in twelve of the population were in receipt of some kind of schooling, but only one in twenty-four of any kind which was of value. In some places, the average was as low as one in forty, but even with these startling facts before them the Committee were content to recommend a continuance of the voluntary system with an extension of grants to the National Society and the British and Foreign Schools Society. The sectarian battle was now in full swing. The small State grants had stimulated competition between the Church, whose claim to dominate education was challenged by the nonconformists, while an influential section of liberal opinion was agitating for the separation of secular and religious education. The Government decided to compromise. It proposed a Special Committee of the Privy Council to supervise

all matters affecting the education of the people. The Committee was appointed in 1839 and at its first meeting decided to provide for the establishment of a State Train'ng College, with model schools attached, to appoint inspectors for grant-aided schools and to grant aid to societies other than the National and British Societies. The college would be non-sectarian, except that it would provide doctrinal instruction at stated times.

Such a storm of opposition arose from the sectarian interests that the Government not only abandoned its project for the training college, but passed on to the National and the British Societies the £10,000 it had earmarked for the purpose !

The Special Committee of the Privy Council survived, however, and it may be considered to be the forerunner of the Board of Education actually established in 1899, just sixty years later. The Government had not surrendered on the right of inspection of schools and grants to other than sectarian bodies.

In the meantime, certain factory legislation had been passed which affected education. The Factory Act of 1819, applying to cotton mills, fixed the minimum age at which children could be employed at 9, but under this Act children ceased to be " young persons " at 16 instead of 18. The hours of labour between 9 and 16 years of age were to be not more than thirteen and a half, allowing one and a half for meals. The provision for education which had been in the 1802 *Health and Morals Act* was omitted altogether. Night work for " young persons " was prohibited. This Act made no provision for factory inspection other than by a magistrate or a clergyman. Indeed, by 1825, J. C. Hobhouse reported that in the six years from the passing of the Act, only two convictions had taken place under the Act, though it was well known that in some mills the children worked

fifteen or sixteen hours a day and that children under 9 years of age were employed.

The Act of 1833 reintroduced the principle of education for two hours a day. It also provided for the appointment of factory and school inspectors. This Act had been preceded by three years' agitation for a ten-hour day. This agitation had been led by Richard Oastler, John Doherty, Sadler and Robert Owen—although Owen contracted out before the end of the campaign, partly because he was critical of the constitutional methods employed by his colleagues, which he blamed for slow progress, and also because he was now advocating an eight-hour day.

From this period we may note a significant change in the character of the pressure for reform on Parliament. So far Parliament had, in leisurely fashion, accepted the minimum of demands made upon it by the few enlightened members of Parliament only after undeniable evidence that it was no longer possible to neglect to do so. Now for the first time there was a public opinion—an opinion which expressed itself in the huge demonstrations organised by the Chartist Movement and since 1824, when the Combination Acts had been repealed, in strikes, lock-outs and industrial unrest. Ministries which had placidly governed by small concessions to appease insistent members of the Opposition parties, or awkward supporters of their own party who suffered occasional attacks of conscience, now began to be seriously alarmed by the clamour of "the mob". So seriously, that in 1843, just before the collapse of the Chartists, the Earl of Shaftesbury moved in the House the "need for instant and serious consideration of the best means of promoting the blessings of a moral and religious education among the working classes". Thus, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the idea still persisted that the

antidote to social and industrial unrest was "a moral and religious" education.

Sir John Graham, the Conservative Home Secretary, responded by introducing in the same year a new Factory Bill. This was to provide for three hours' compulsory education for children employed in woollen, flax, silk and cotton mills, and proposed to limit the child labour to six and a half hours per day for those between 8 and 13 years of age. In accordance with tradition, Graham had to face the religious difficulty and proposed to do this by providing that the schoolmaster should be a member of the Church of England and the management of the schools consisting of trustees, the clergyman and churchwardens, two others to be appointed by the magistrates and two by the mill owners. Attendance at Church was to be compulsory on Sundays, with day-time Church of England religious instructions. For the first time a conscience clause was inserted which allowed non-communicants to contract out of attendance at church.

As might be expected, nonconformist opposition rose like a river in full flood. The protest was so strong that although Graham proposed drastic amendments to his own Bill he had, eventually, no alternative but to withdraw it. The importance of the Graham Bill was that it raised, for the first time, the question of semi-public control over school management. The control suggested by Graham could not be called public in the sense that the trustees were to be elected by and responsible to the public, but the proposal itself intensified the controversy between the two factions, one which believed no sound education was possible unless it were directed by the Church and was heated in its opposition to secular control of any kind, appointed or elected, and the other faction increasingly resolved to press for a national system of

education financed by the State and under the control of representative bodies. The phrase "No taxation without representation" was a slogan now being used in the educational controversy.

For twelve years after 1843 Parliament made no serious effort to introduce legislation on education of any important character. It decided to take the line of least resistance by coming to the help of the voluntary societies. State inspection, however, was extended and grants made contingent upon the observation of certain simple standards of attainment. The Committee in Council used its powers to make grants to schools other than those provided by the two national societies, subject to the schools providing religious instruction, though this need not be sectarian in character. Those who supported the voluntary system argued that, by 1851, the two national societies had brought the power to read and write within the reach of a school population approximating to two millions. It should not be assumed from this that two million children were in daily attendance at school. The picture nearer to the truth was that presented to a conference on national education in 1857. Of the two million children claimed to be on the school registers, 42 per cent attended less than one year, 22 per cent for less than two years, and 15 per cent for less than three years, so that approximately two-thirds were in school for less than two years.[1] What is of equal importance is that a large proportion of the children were half-timers. These figures were substantially confirmed by the Duke of Newcastle's Commission Report in 1861—that approximately one in eight of the population came under some form of school influence.

This Commission thought children should be encouraged to attend school in their earlier years as they

[1] Birchenough, *History of Elementary Education.*

could not be expected to remain at school beyond the age of 11. Of the children who did attend school, two-thirds were in Church of England schools, and it should be noted that in the half-century up to 1860, the Church had voluntarily raised something like eight million pounds for maintenance and had spent millions on school buildings. On the other hand, the grants from State funds had been steadily rising, so much so that in the period 1860 to 1866 inclusive, the State had provided nearly five millions and the claims to public control could no longer be ignored.

The question now debated was whether the voluntary system could be supplanted by a national system, wholly provided by the State, or whether the Government should encourage the development of a State system running side by side with the voluntary system. Most Liberals now favoured the former course, but the Government, led in 1870 by Mr. Gladstone, were for the second course, and this compromise was adopted in the Forster Education Act of 1870, which preserved the position of existing voluntary schools, but gave municipal boroughs the power to make good deficiency of accommodation. In presenting the Bill, Forster argued that there were a million children between 6 and 10 not provided for, and half a million between 10 and 12.[1]

School Boards were to be established to make good deficiency in provision, and they were to be empowered to call for an education rate and to secure attendance of children between 5 and 13 years of age. This did not mean that there was to be compulsory attendance up to 13. Attendance was not made obligatory until 1876, and it was not until 1899 that the age for leaving was raised to 12. The significance of this Act was that the

[1] Birchenough, *History of Elementary Education*.

State, for the first time, was to make actual provision for elementary education and that its method of doing so imposed upon the country a dual system of education which is still one of the anachronisms of the British educational system. The Liberal Party strongly opposed the levying of a local rate to subsidise and extend the denominational schools, and the one concession the Government made was to amend this clause of the Act, providing, instead of aid from the rates for voluntary schools, increased grants from the State. That the Liberals foresaw what would happen is shown by the extraordinary development of interest which the denominationalists exhibited. They took advantage of the opportunity much more quickly than the School Boards and more than two-thirds of the claims for building grants were from denominational school managers. They had been warned by the proposal to set up School Boards that this was a challenge and they responded with energy. It was in this period that so many voluntary schools were erected. For the first time the children profited by the competition between those who stood for sectarian and those who desired a national system of education. School Boards had been given powers to make attendance compulsory, but these powers had not been extensively exercised. Even the Education Act of 1876, which was to apply to the whole country, provided certain exceptions. Under that Act a child could leave school at 10 years of age if he had passed a Standard IV examination in the three R's and made 150 attendances in each of five years. He could even be exempted from these restrictions at 10 years of age as a half-time factory worker.

Mundella's Act of 1880 improved this position slightly by insisting that no half-timer could be employed between 10 and 13 years of age unless he had obtained a certificate of proficiency determined by local by-laws. By 1893

the minimum age for leaving school or half-time employment became 11, and by 1899 it became 12, exceptions being allowed for agriculture where children could become half-timers at 11 years of age. In this same year the Board of Education [1] was established with a President answerable to Parliament, either directly or through his Parliamentary Secretary. In addition, a Consultative Committee to the Board was set up.

Three years later (1902) the Balfour Education Act was passed. This Act, which was to guarantee to every child, irrespective of its social position, a free education, was undoubtedly a real epoch in the development of the modern system. It made County and Borough entirely responsible for provision. It abolished thousands of local school boards and attendance committees and substituted over 300 local authorities. The Bill also encouraged the development of secondary and technical education by empowering local authorities to establish rate-aided schools for higher education. The opportunity for secondary education, however, was very limited, partly by the totally inadequate amount which local authorities could spend on secondary education, but mainly by the economic position of parents who could not afford to maintain their children at school.

The principle of the dual system was continued, the local authority becoming responsible for the non-provided schools as they were now termed—the Church authorities to be responsible for the repair of the school fabric. The church school managers had power to appoint their own teachers, who must be approved by the local education authority, but approval could only be refused on grounds of educational inefficiency.

Many efforts have been made to secure a unified education system and to abolish dual control. Mr.

[1] The title, " Board of Education " is retained throughout as the Board did not become a Ministry until the Act of 1944.

Augustine Birrell tried in the Liberal Government of 1906. Later, Mr. McKenna proposed a system of transfers of non-provided schools to local authorities with power for the school managers to contract out and receive State grant provided they fulfilled the Board of Education conditions as regards teaching efficiency. Other bills, on similar lines, have been proposed, but no effort has yet succeeded or appears to be within measurable distance of success.

The most important development which emerged from the educational discussions in this period, was a realisation that education of the mind was closely related to the physical health of the child. In 1908 over a quarter of the would-be army recruits had been rejected as physically unfit, and it began to be recognised that most of the defects for which they were rejected would not have developed except for neglect in the formative years. These matters will be discussed at a later stage, but it is important to note the 1906 Act (Provision of Meals) as a milestone in educational development. This Act empowered authorities to establish school canteens, though the rate allocated for this purpose was not to exceed one-halfpenny in the pound.

The following year saw an even more important development in the legislation imposing on local authorities the responsibility for the periodic medical inspection of school children. Special grants were available to assist authorities to set up school medical departments, and the Board of Education established its own department with a Chief Medical Officer of Health, a departure which has perhaps been the most enlightened educational advance of the century.

At the same time, a Bill was passed to limit the employment of children outside school hours.

The main lesson we have learned from State inter-

vention in education from 1902 has been that the State could not only provide education, but that it could provide and influence the social and economic environment which made education effective. The six years, 1902–8, had seen a national system firmly established. The return of forty Labour members to the Parliament of 1910 gave an impetus to the demand for further educational advance. Most of the Labour members were the products of the period of the slender educational opportunities of the early board-school days, plus such opportunities as they had sought in the " night schools ". Education in night schools had been recommended by the Newcastle Commission and the Privy Council Committee accepted the recommendation and tried to encourage their growth by small grants in aid for pupils over 12 years of age. The Balfour Education Act, 1902, had empowered local authorities to raise the product of a penny rate for other than elementary education. This could be used by the more enlightened authorities to extend the provision of technical education and to provide better facilities for evening schools. Even then, the night school and, later, the evening school neither attracted nor retained when they did attract, any large proportion of the adolescent population. There had been nothing in the provision of education up to the end of the nineteenth century to stimulate enthusiasm for continuing it. Not the least of the tragedies of that provision is that young men and women had come to deride education as the result of the only experience they had had of it. This partly explains why the working-class population shortened the school life of its own children and why the children, themselves, breathed sighs of relief when their schools days were over.

The 1893 revised code for evening schools which allowed pupils up to 21 years of age to attend and recog-

nised them for grant, gave a fillip to the spread of evening schools, but, even as late as 1914, the attendance of juveniles was notoriously poor, only 20 per cent of the age group 14 to 18 being in attendance, and of those who did attend many failed to put in an appearance after the first week or two. In spite of these disquieting facts, many of the adult population in the early part of the present century owed everything to the night or evening schools for what education they received, and this was true of many of the early Labour Members of Parliament.

It is not without significance that the next important step in educational reform was preceded, like that of 1870 and 1902, by a period of intense industrial and political unrest. Students of industrial history who lived through the period 1910 to 1914 will remember the episodes. The Transport strikes of 1911, the miners' strike of 1912, the huge surge of political controversy in the working-class movement on the virtues of direct or political action arising out of the growing interest in syndicalism which was making many converts in the Labour Movement, the political ferment over Ireland with the prospect of armed insurrection in Northern Ireland. It was in this atmosphere of industrial and political conflict that Mr. Pease was to introduce, in 1913, an education bill which aimed at securing wider opportunities for secondary and technical education and for improving elementary education. The War intervened and the energies of the country were turned to destruction instead of construction.

The almost unanimous unity with which the country entered the war in 1939 was in sharp contrast to the position in 1914. The Labour Movement itself was seriously divided, and although Labour Members of Parliament joined the Coalition Government of 1915,

industrial unrest continued. It was not until the country was passing through the grim and fearful days of 1917 that the common danger and the growing hope in the Rt. Hon. Lloyd George's promises of a land fit for heroes seized the popular imagination and secured wider co-operative effort. Mr. Lloyd George certainly gave evidence of his good intention so far as education was concerned when, in 1917, he invited Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sheffield, to become President of the Board of Education. It was a revolutionary departure to go outside the ranks of the political party system for a Cabinet Minister for Education, but this was even less revolutionary than that an educational expert should be selected to deal with education. While it might be considered a matter of course to engage a plumber to plumb, it had never been considered necessary to select an educationist to plan and administer education.

The choice was justified by events. Teachers, educational administrators and, not least in importance, children owe a debt of gratitude to Fisher for his Education Bill of 1918. Much of the machinery was to lie idle during the early years following the war. Some of it was incorporated in the Act of 1921 and some of the proposals, i.e., continued part-time education up to 18 years of age, is still an ideal to be attained. Salaries of teachers had long been a public scandal and men and women of ability were not being attracted to the profession. The average salaries in 1914, even for head masters, were less than £4 per week. The Act abolished the limit of the 2*d.* rate for higher education, thus encouraging the extension of secondary education. It brought nursery school provision within the range of practical application by empowering, though not compelling local authorities to establish or aid nursery schools. How little we had

really progressed may be gleaned from the fact that in 1918 the Bill abolished half-time employment and raised the school-leaving age to 14. It also gave power to local authorities to prepare by-laws to raise the school-leaving age to 15, and it is sufficiently indicative of our lack of knowledge of our own legislative power to point out that only two or three authorities have ever taken advantage of these powers under the Act.

The Act also prohibited the employment of children in any kind of employment for gain under 12 years of age. Over 12 no child could be employed on Sundays for more than two hours and not before 6 a.m. or after 8 p.m. on any day. This does not appear to be particularly enlightened for 1918, but it must be remembered that Fisher was opposed by many vested interests, some of which had not been adverse to exploiting the nimble fingers of the children, on the excuse of labour shortage during the war, as evidenced by the public protests and special campaigns against this exploitation organised by the Workers' Educational Association and its affiliated bodies.

Local education authorities were given wider responsibilities and made answerable to the Board of Education for submitting comprehensive schemes to fill the gaps in education in their areas.

The Act has become famous for the proposal to provide continuative part-time education up to 18 years of age. This clause was not to be enforced for a period of seven years following the passing of the Act, and in the interval the age for compulsory part-time education was fixed at 16. This part of the Act has remained inoperative, though the Act of 1944 makes provision up to 18 years for two half-days a week in the Employers' time.

Mr. Fisher, like his predecessors, refused to be drawn into the controversy on religious education or even to

face, seriously, the question of dual control. He did make an effort by an amending Act in 1921 to improve the control of the local education authorities so far as appointment and dismissal of teachers were concerned and to make the local authorities responsibile for the repair and maintenance of non-provided schools, subject to the buildings remaining the property of the school managers, to be used by them when not in use by the L.E.A., i.e., for Sunday-school and meeting use. As agreement with the religious interests could not be secured the Bill was dropped.

What did grow out of the Act was an appreciable increase of secondary education, though this was still so limited by economic circumstances of the parent that only a fraction of the children who could have profited by it were able to take advantage of it. Public opinion had moved so far, however, that the proposals of the Hadow Committee in 1927 for the reorganisation of the whole system to provide for a break at 11 with a planned educational course lasting for four years to suit the varying needs of the children, were received with great enthusiasm. Two years later the Labour Government of 1929 was in Office, with Sir Charles Trevelyan as President of the Board of Education. His first step was to prepare a Bill to raise the school-leaving age to 15 from an appointed day—April 1931—and to provide maintenance allowances. The time seemed appropriate. Unemployment was at its peak and was aggravated by nearly half a million children leaving school every year at 14 years of age, to swell the already overcrowded labour markets.

The Bill involved encouragement of new building schemes on a large scale and the modernisation of many existing schools. Here the difficulty arose in regard to the non-provided schools. The school managers had

neither the money to build new senior schools nor to modernise existing ones, and the old question of control arose if the State were to be expected to provide the finance.

Proposals were put forward for compromise but, eventually, the Bill was passed with a clause postponing its operation until an Act was agreed upon authorising grants from public funds to enable managers of non-provided schools to comply with the building requirements. This amending Act was passed in 1936. It was the Bill to raise the school-leaving age to 15 but provided for exemptions allowing children to leave school at 14 if parents could satisfy the local education authority that beneficial employment was offered. In spite of strong opposition to the exemption clauses—from local authorities, teaching bodies and working-class educational and industrial organisations, the Government refused to withdraw the obnoxious clauses and the Bill passed through both Houses.

The appointed day was to be September 1, 1939, but two days later war was declared and again an opportunity, which, but for sectarian differences could have been effective from 1936, was deferred first to April, 1945, and later to April, 1947, though in this case without exemptions for "beneficial employment". If, however, we are to build a new and better social order, a leaving age of 15 can only be considered as the first stage to a much bolder and more imaginative educational policy.

Chapter II

EDUCATION TODAY

English education reflects strikingly the society of which it is a part. The same contrasts between wealth and poverty are well represented by the expenditure on the children of Boston, Lincs., or Falmouth, whose schooling costs £9 6*s.* 2*d.* a year, and those at Eton on whom at least £315 [1]—generally much more—is lavished annually. There are the same extremes of comfort, as seen in the comparison between all that modern planning can provide in a Cambridgeshire village college or in the latest secondary school, and the slum elementary schools which are the dismal relics of Victorianism. The general standard, too, is still typically drab and depressing. Thus, according to Mr. Seebohm Rowntree, in his recent survey of social conditions in York (*Poverty and Progress*), all but one of the voluntary schools in that city were built between 1834 and 1890, and all but two of the council schools between 1891 and 1916. Again, there are the same wide differences of opportunity. Though many students from working-class homes now reach the universities and distinguish themselves there, the road is steep and admission is highly competitive—but only for those who are not well off. And, in spite of all the difference that the scholarship system has made in the last generation, recent research has shown that, for seven fee-paying students who receive a higher education, only one free pupil of equal ability is so favoured.[2] Finally, the chances of life and health are widely different. Sir John Orr has shown that the boys at Christ's Hospital —a public boarding-school—were on the average two

[1] Laybourne and White, *Education and the Birth-rate.*
[2] Gray, *The Nation's Intelligence*, p. 95.

inches taller at the age of 13 and four inches taller at 17 than a similar sample of boys from elementary schools ; and one in six of the children who enter our infant schools at the age of 5 start their school careers handicapped by largely preventable physical defects.

Thus the characteristic feature is the existence, side by side, of two quite different educational systems, one for the few and the other for the many. There were in 1938 just over five million children, aged 5–14, in public elementary and secondary schools—representing 92.6 per cent of the total estimated population of those ages. Most of the remaining 391,000 were at private schools, which term includes both the small school " round the corner " and the expensive preparatory boarding-schools at places like Eastbourne or in some adapted country house. These send their pupils to one of the select public schools, of which Eton, Harrow and Winchester are, of course, the most famous, or the other schools—boarding or day—of a similar type, in which some 80,000 boys and girls are educated. The two groups see as little of each other and can as little imagine the condition of each other's lives as can the dwellers in the East and the West End. As will be stressed later, all this would matter much less were it not for the fact that the influence of the schools for the few in the government of the many is out of all proportion to their numbers. Since the Board of Education was created forty-two years ago, to take only one example, we have had two Presidents of the Board of Education (Arthur Henderson for a few months) who began life in anything resembling an elementary school, and Miss Ellen Wilkinson appointed 1945. Of the other eighteen at least twelve were at one of the big " public schools ". Nor is this merely the heritage of the past, for the most recent Presidents have come more definitely from the " top layer " than their pre-

decessors : of the seven who have reigned since 1931, four were " Eton and Oxford ", and the others were at Clifton, Uppingham and Marlborough.

Having thus indicated some of the familiar but unrealised features of the educational landscape, it is time to describe its pattern and *administration.*

For England and Wales there is one central authority, the Board of Education, which is a Government department normally in Whitehall. The " Board " nominally consists of a number of Cabinet Ministers, including the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister ; but it has never met and there would be a first-class sensation if it ever did. When " the Board of Education " suggests or " the Board of Education " decides, the authority is that of the President—a Cabinet Minister—and the voice is that of a body of Civil Servants, with a Permanent Secretary at their head, selected like other high Civil Servants in other departments, and learning what they know about education from their day-to-day experience in administering it : an occupation in which they may spend years without going into an actual school.

There is a Welsh Department of the Board, with its own Permanent Secretary. Scotland, on the other hand, has its own Scottish Education Department in Edinburgh, but without a President, as the Secretary of State for Scotland is responsible for this as for other sections of Scottish government. The Board has the advantage of the expert advice of a consultative committee to which the President refers particular problems from time to time, and which has produced a series of valuable reports, one of which—" The Hadow Report "—has become the inspiration of important reforms.

The Board of Education does not, itself, run any schools : that is the work of the local education authorities ; and the Board's influence over them is mainly

derived from the fact that it pays grants, amounting, in recent years, to rather less than half their total expenditure. Under the 1944 Act, the Central grant to L.E.A's is slightly over half local expenditure, especially as several functions such as medical inspection and treatment are to be covered by regulations of the Minister of Health. The local education authorities were 146 counties and county boroughs, 148 borough councils and 22 urban district councils, a total of 316 local authorities. Boroughs which in 1901, had less than 10,000 population and urban districts which had less than 20,000 were not recognised. The 146 counties and county boroughs had full powers and were charged under Part II of the 1921 Education Act with the responsibility for " higher education ", which includes secondary and technical institutions ; the boroughs and urban districts often known as " Part III " authorities administered elementary, now to be known as primary education. The area and population served by the authorities varied widely. Thus among the " Part III " authorities we find, on the one hand, Tottenham with, in round figures, 16,400 children in school, or Rhondda, with 18,600, and, at the other extreme, Tiverton, with 854 children on its roll. Of the Part II authorities, the London County Council, with nearly 400,000 children in its elementary schools, and the West Riding (147,600) are the largest, and the Soke of Peterborough (904) and Rutland (2,015) the smallest, among the counties ; and the county boroughs range from Birmingham and Liverpool, 118,000, to Canterbury, 2,628. The act of 1944 completely abolishes the Part III authority. The recognised authorities are, with special exceptions referred to later, to be county or county borough councils, but in the county areas provision is to be made for dividing the areas for administrative purposes and appointing divisional exe-

cutives. These have been established in most counties and consist mainly of representatives of local borough and urban district councils, members of the county authorities and persons representing special educational interests. The exceptions referred to are boroughs or urban district councils with a population on June 1939 of not less than 60,000 and with not less than 7,000 pupils on the roll of the elementary schools at March 31, 1939. Where these conditions are not fulfilled the Minister may, after consultation with the county authority, make a special exception if he is convinced there are special reasons for doing so. The net result of this readjustment has been to reduce the number of recognised authorities in England and Wales from 314 to 146 and to place much more responsibility, especially on the County authorities.

It is obvious that prior to the act of 1944 there were wide differences in the services of the various authorities and a few illustrations may be quoted. Thus the amounts spent per child on the salaries of teachers range from £13 15*s.* 7*d.* in London and £15 14*s.* 8*d.* in Aberdare, to £6 6*s.* 7*d.* in Boston ; on "special services" (school meals, nursery schools, play centres, medical services, etc.) from £3 5*s.* 11*d.* in London and £2 7*s.* 8*d.* in Manchester to 6*s.* 1*d.* in Chelmsford and 9*s.* 4*d.* in the East Riding of Yorkshire. The elementary education rate is 12*s.* per head in one town ; 23*s.* 2*d.* in another a few miles away ; and 32*s.* 6*d.* in an East London borough. A few large urban authorities have reorganised all their schools on the lines of the Hadow Report, while others have hardly begun to do so. Some authorities have a good service of school meals, or open-air schools, or nursery schools ; others have none of these things. Some are prompt to accept responsibility for the delinquent children committed to them by the magistrates for "care and

protection" ; others have never awakened to the problem.

All these differences have some relation to the size and quality of the area concerned. They also reflect. of course, differences in the political complexion and personal make up of the councils concerned. How, then, are the actual functions of an education authority discharged ? The county or borough council is, of course, responsible. It is the education authority. It works, however, mainly through its Education Committee, perhaps the most important of all its committees, to which it *must* refer all educational issues and on which it *may* devolve all its powers (except the power to levy a rate). The Education Committee is fairly large. It must include some co-opted members chosen to represent the various branches of education in the area ; and it must include women. It commonly meets quarterly (in London, in peace time, fortnightly), though much of the routine work is done by sub-committees dealing with special subjects such as school attendance, elementary schools, higher education, staffing, etc. Its chief official is the Director of Education, Education Officer or Secretary for Education (though in some of the smaller towns the Town Clerk used to exercise the functions of this office) ; he has his staff of clerks, school attendance—or school welfare—officers, etc., ; and the bigger authorities also employ their own inspectors.

There remain to be mentioned the school management committees through which immediate local interest in the schools can, to some extent, find expression. This brings us to the most persistently awkward of all the problems confronting the educational reformer—the problem of dual control discussed in Chapter I. Every school has a body of managers—though in some cases several schools directly provided by the L.E.A. are

grouped under one management committee. But the composition and the powers of the managers depend on whether the school is one provided—that is to say built and owned—by the education authority, or whether it is a " voluntary " or " non-provided " school. Most of the Nonconformist schools—mainly those built through the agency of the British and Foreign Schools Society, or by the Wesleyan denomination—have now been handed over to the education authority. There are now about 9,000 church schools attended by 22 per cent of the children on the rolls of elementary schools, 1,266 Roman Catholic schools, with 7.4 per cent ; and 295 Nonconformist and 13 Jewish schools with together less than 1 per cent. Thus, though the council schools are just under half of the total, they have 70 per cent of the children on their books. The full significance of these figures will emerge later on. Meanwhile the Education Act 1944 has introduced changes in the control of voluntary schools; the provision is a complicated compromise. Instead of one type of " non-provided " school there will be three—aided, controlled and special agreement schools. Briefly, a controlled school will be one where the managers cannot, either on grounds of expense or for other reasons, undertake to bring the school up to modern standards, and if the L.E.A. so desires it may assume responsibility. In aided schools and special agreement schools, the managers representing the voluntary body are responsible for alterations in premises to bring them up to standards required by the L.E.A. and for repairs other than school grounds, playing fields and internal repairs. The Minister may pay to the managers of these schools one half of their outlay for alterations required by the L.E.A. and for repairs to premises. In controlled schools, the foundation managers are to be one third of not less than six ; in aided and special agreement

schools, two-thirds. The local authority appoints the other members. The appointment and dismissal of teachers in all schools, subject to the special provisions in regard to religious teaching, is to be under the control of the L.E.A.

The central difficulty about the "dual control" system nowadays is financial. The voluntary societies can seldom raise the money necessary for rebuilding or adapting the schools to the standards set by modern educational ideas, and consequently great differences develop between the opportunities available to children in different places. Thus of 753 schools still remaining on the Board's Black List, 541 are non-provided schools ;[1] while of a million and a half children attending schools which have not been "reorganised", rather more than a half are in non-provided schools, of which only one-third had been reorganised in 1938, compared with three-quarters of the council schools. The churches have been given a great opportunity to put their schools in order. If they do not respond in the spirit of the 1944 Act, their case for denominational powers will have even less justification than in the past.

So much for the broad outlines of educational administration. It is now time to turn to the schools themselves. For a brief spell we must forsake formal administrative formula and try to absorb the spirit of the modern council school. Let us spend a day in one—typical of hundreds in various parts of the country.

We should arrive a little before nine to find some 250 children playing in an asphalt school yard. At some schools there would be separate grounds for boys and girls. In others the sexes would be mixed. In almost all cases the space would be too restricted for the needs of so many active children. One of the teachers,

[1] White Paper Education Reconstruction, 1943.

taking turn at " playground duty " to prevent accidents, blows a whistle, " lines " are drawn up and the children march in. In the new senior schools there is a school hall in which all can assemble for a hymn and prayers and special announcements. The school we are visiting has no such advantage. The children march along corridors direct into their own classrooms, and after a roll call the " monitors " for the week " give out the books ". The " scripture lesson " must come at the beginning or end of the day, so that any child whose parents may object to it, can take advantage of the " conscience " clause and must be provided with some secular occupation. In the council school religious instruction must be taught without denominational bias, though section 13 of the 1936 Act provides the option where parents demand it The same provision is made under Section 25 of the Act of 1944, with important additions, i.e., formerly religious instruction was compulsory in primary schools only. Now all schools under public control must open with *collective worship* for all pupils, and religious instruction becomes compulsory except in cases where parents desire their children should be excused. On the contrary, parents of children who desire that their children should receive denominational teaching, such children may be withdrawn for this purpose at the beginning or end of the school session, if there is no school within reasonable distance providing the kind of religious instruction desired. With these exceptions the religious education in all schools provided by the authority must be undenominational and be based on an agreed syllabus prepared by a committee consisting of representatives of the Churches, Teachers, members of the L.E.A. and other interests affected. If the Committee fails to reach agreement on the syllabus to be in general use, the Minister has power to appoint an

independent body of members having experience in religious instruction and delegating the power to such body. Agreed syllabuses—the result of consultations between education authorities, teachers, and the different religious bodies in the area—are being increasingly used. If we were visiting a " Church " school, we should find the religious teaching on Church of England lines, with the Vicar taking a personal part in it and the subject inspected by an inspector appointed by the Bishop.

For some years it is feared there may be many of the teachers in schools such as we are now visiting, in charge of as many as three classes. Fortunately, the Act of 1944 provides that all children shall be transferred from the primary to some form of secondary school, without the limitation enforced by " winning a scholarship ", or being " awarded a special place ", the first being all too often the prize for cramming and the second the consolation for being the child of poor parents. Up to now, the opportunity for most children to enjoy post primary education has depended upon whether the education authority has affected re-organisation and provided enough senior or central schools, so that at or near 10, children could be transferred. Meanwhile, we must return to the elementary school. Arithmetic would probably take pride of place in the time table while minds are fresh to deal with its mysteries. If the weather is fine we should meet the children again in the playground, enjoying an interval in which free milk would make a valuable contribution. Back into school for a history lesson, not so much today a chronicle of dates of births, marriages and deaths of kings, queens and princes, but a much more exciting process of co-operatively building history round the walls of the classroom by drawing, charts and models, and by simple acting of historic episodes. The change is gradual and not all schools have adapted themselves to modern ideas,

and there are all too few where even in the top standards sufficient emphasis is given to industrial history.

It may be that on the day of our call there is a visit from one of His Majesty's inspectors. That would have been an ordeal for both teacher and children fifty years ago. Those were the days of "payment by results" and the inspector's task was to examine every child in the three "R's" and on his report depended directly the Government grant to the school and, consequently, the teacher's salary. That vicious system has gone. The inspectors now report on the school as a whole. They criticise and advise and pass on to one school the good ideas they see operating in another, or they should do if they know their job.

Perhaps the "inspection" may be of a different kind. It may be a medical inspection, about which more will be said in the next chapter. Sufficient to say now that if the school had done nothing more than provide the minimum of three medical examinations and subsequent treatment during the normal school life, it would have justified every penny spent on education since medical inspection commenced.

The tragedy is that so much of the splendid effort of school medical officers and clinical staffs has to be devoted to minor ailments which need not have developed if adequate provision were made for nursery schools. Up to 1938 there were only about 120 altogether with some 6,000 children in them, but these, from the age of 2 till they enter the infant school at 5, have constant medical supervision, receive a nutritious midday meal, develop good and cleanly habits—learn to play and co-operate with other children, and escape many of the childish physical ailments which develop unsuspectedly and are so difficult to put right later on. The Act of 1944 leaves the age of compulsory education at 5, but provides that

the L.E.A. shall provide nursery schools or nursery classes in infant schools from the age of 2 to 5 where the authority is satisfied that there the demand is justified.

It is possible that the most unfavourable impression we shall bring away from this school will be that of harassed teachers trying to cope with classes which are far too large. However good the school may be, or however capable the teacher, the quality of the work and the extent to which the children "grow" mentally and spiritually, depends upon the teacher having time to give some attention to the individual development of each child. This problem is important enough to call for more attention in a later chapter. Unfortunately, it is in the infant stage where overcrowding is most prevalent, and, strangely enough, it has sometimes been assumed that because of this it is less deplorable. When Lord Stanhope was President of the Board of Education a deputation from the National Union of Teachers and the Workers' Educational Association waited on the noble Lord to press him to reduce the size of classes to a maximum of thirty. Lord Stanhope pointed out that it was *only* in the infant departments that very large classes existed ! That, of course, is a tragedy, not a justification.

Our day in the elementary school has not enabled us to go through the whole curricula. It may be that we should have been fortunate enough to hear a singing lesson to learn the value of those things which the children do in unison. We may have seen something of their art work—not the old cubes and cylinders but imaginative paintings and drawings, encouraging originality. If it were summer, perhaps we should find groups of children marching out of school to the local baths for a swimming lesson, or setting off to the woods for a lesson in botany. If the school was not too overcrowded we should notice a certain ordered planning and definite

preparation of the older children for participation in the more liberal education promised in the Hadow Report and embodied in the Act of 1944. However, what we have to observe is what exists rather than what is promised. The liberal education promised through free places in secondary schools is no longer to be governed by what is termed the *special place examination.*

This was, in fact, a wicket gate which admitted into the secondary school about one in seven. It ought to have been an open highway. The famous Hadow Report on *The Education of the Adolescent*, presented by the Consultative Committee to the Board of Education in 1926, recommended that all children, at the age of 11 or thereabouts, should be transferred to one or other of a number of different types of secondary school :

> There is a tide which begins to rise in the veins of youth at the age of eleven or twelve. It is called by the name of adolescence. If that tide can be taken at the flood, and a new voyage begun in the strength and along the flow of its current, we think that it will "move on to fortune." We therefore propose that all children should be transferred, at the age of eleven or twelve, from the junior or primary school either to schools of the type now called secondary, or to schools (whether selective or non-selective) of the type which is now called central, or senior and separate departments of existing elementary schools. Transplanted to new ground, and set in a new environment, which should be adjusted, as far as possible to the interests and abilities of each range and variety, we believe that they will thrive to a new height and attain a sturdier fibre.

The scheme which we advocate can be simply stated. It is that between the age of eleven and (if possible) that of fifteen, all the children of the country who do not go forward to "secondary education" in the present and narrow sense of the word, should go forward none the less to what is, in our view, a form of secondary education, in the truer and broader sense of the word, and after spend-

> ing the first years of their school life in a primary school should spend the last three or four in a well-equipped and well-staffed modern school (or senior department), under the stimulus of practical work and realistic studies, and yet at the same time, in the free and broad air of a general and humane education, which, if it remembers handwork, does not forget music, and if it cherishes natural science, fosters also linguistic and literary studies.

The same committee in its later Spens Report (1938) proposed three types of school, to be known as the Grammar School (similar to the present secondary school), the Modern, and the Technical High School. There has been much discussion of these proposals in detail, and an alternative plan, favoured by the T.U.C. and some other bodies, and known as the Multilateral School, would mean that all children would pass at 11 to a single secondary school with varied courses to suit all types of ability. The common feature in all these schemes, on which there is now general agreement, is that they should make none but educational distinctions. The Hadow Report, as the Board explained, in its pamphlet *The New Prospect in Education*, has in mind :

> all sorts and conditions of children, the humble and the weak as well as the mighty and the strong, and that to concentrate especially on the erection of a few splendidly equipped schools for selected children is to miss its real lesson. The advance contemplated is not on a narrow and selective front, but the whole line is to move forward.

Thus conditions of education for all children over 11 should be similar ; size of classes, accommodation, qualifications of teaching staff, playing-fields, and so on. If there be justification for special examination, they should be merely a classifying test to discover what type of secondary school is best suited to the child's aptitude and ability.

Now that the "special place" in secondary education disappears we might briefly examine its origin. The provision of free secondary education began in this country with the "scholarships" given, in the early years of this century, to a very few of the cleverest children in the elementary schools. With the introduction of the "free place" system in 1907, when the grant from the Board of Education to secondary schools was made conditional on a minimum 25 per cent free admissions, the number of scholarships gradually increased; and in 1920 a committee was set up to enquire how many should be provided. It recommended that the percentage of admission should be raised from 25 to 40, that fees should eventually be abolished, and that secondary school places should be provided on a basis of twenty per thousand of the population.

The term "free place" was in general use until 1932, and some education authorities (including Durham County) had made all secondary education free, when, as part of the programme of "economies" then imposed on all social services, L.E.A.s were obliged to adopt a "means test" system, charging all or part of the fees according to the family income. At the same time they were obliged to raise the fees generally to £15 a year, and in any case to a minimum of £9. Up to the Act of 1944 the level of fees was from 9 to 12 guineas in rather over one third of the secondary schools in England and Wales; less than 9 guineas in 28 per cent; from 12 to 15 guineas in just under one-fifth; and over 15 guineas in one-sixth of the schools. When a pupil was awarded a "special place", his parents must generally state their income, rent and number in family, and the full fee, or part of it was remitted accordingly; while in certain cases allowances were made for maintenance, travel, books, etc. Of the pupils in grant-aided secondary schools in 1938,

46 per cent paid no fees, while another 8.5 per cent paid reduced fees. The total of students in these schools was 11.4 per 1,000 of the population[1] (estimated at 41,169,000 in that year); but the 215,125 who enjoyed free places were only 5.2 per 1,000.

The map of *Secondary Education* is much more variegated than the elementary map with its fairly well defined division into council and voluntary schools. It was not until 1902 that local education authorities obtained the power to provide secondary education, and until the Act of 1944, it remained a "power" and not a "duty" to do so. Moreover, the organised provision of what we now call secondary education is much older than that of elementary schools; and we are here concerned not only with the newest municipal or county secondary school but with grammar and other schools of ancient foundation, "public" and other boarding-schools, schools founded by religious bodies—Catholic, Methodist, Quaker—as well as private ventures and experimental schools of all sorts.

The main body of secondary schools is, however, related to the State provision of education by the fact that it consists of schools either provided or aided by L.E.A.s or aided directly by the Board of Education. Rather more than half of the schools on the Board's Grant List are council schools, and of the 470,000 pupils in 1938, just under three-fifths were in these schools. Apart from 92 Roman Catholic schools and about a hundred Welsh intermediate schools—a type of school dating from before 1902 and which reminds us that Wales was ahead of England in this matter—the balance consists of 430 "foundation" and other schools, with under one-third of the pupils. These tend to be

[1] If the "recognised" but not grant-aided schools were included, the total is 13 per 1,000.

smaller as many of them are in the smaller (and older) towns.

All secondary schools have their own body of governors, but in the case of the foundation schools, the independence of the governors is considerable. They appoint the head master (or head mistress), who himself generally appoints his staff; and they control the finances and the general policy of the school. The L.E.A. appoints its representatives on to their body, but this is far from giving the authority the direct control which it exercises over its own schools. There is, however, one real element of public control. Since 1907, as mentioned above, under the "free place"—now the "special place"—system no school can receive grant from a L.E.A. unless it takes in aided pupils from elementary schools to the extent of one-quarter of its previous year's admissions. There remain the group known as direct grant schools, because they have exercised their right to receive grant direct from the Board itself. There were 235 of these schools up to the Act of 1944, but some have since become "independent schools" because they were not prepared to comply with the Act which insists that they must accept up to 25 per cent of their pupils from elementary schools or, if the L.E.A. desire to claim so many places, up to 50 per cent. A few other direct grant schools have not had their recognition renewed by the Minister. Before the Act of 1944, most of them were required to admit 25 per eent of aidcd pupils though a certain number were allowed to take a lower proportion, in some 78 cases no more than 10 per cent, and, in return, receive a lower grant. The direct contact with the Board helps these schools, in many cases, to preserve a prestige which they have gained from their history, the special relations they are able to maintain with the older universities, and other less easily defined factors of "snob appeal"!

Finally, there are the *Private and "Public" Schools*, ironically enough outside the public system of education altogether; and these fall into two or three different categories. From time to time the Board of Education publishes a list—List 60—of recognised secondary schools, which includes all the direct and indirect grant aid schools already referred to, and also some 750 independent schools (including 350 preparatory schools), which have asked to be inspected, and which are "recognised as efficient". These include many of the famous public schools, including Eton and Harrow, Quaker schools, and well-known private venture schools, like Bedales, which get their importance from the personality of a notable head master or from an individual approach to education; among girls' schools in this category are some on a religious basis, including convent schools, some proprietary, and some foundation schools. Many of these schools are boarding-schools, the great vogue for which belongs to the nineteenth century.

Most of the "public schools" are in this category. It is a constant puzzle to foreigners why the schools which are *not* under any form of State control should be called public schools. The name dates from the period when so many of them were founded, which was before the State-provided schools began to come into existence. They were "public", as distinct from the private venture schools, "halls", "academies" and the rest, run by individuals for profit, of the worst of which Dickens gives such a lurid picture in *Dotheboys' Hall*. The public schools were generally endowed schools, with a responsible body of governors; and the reforming spirit of the Victorian era, as well as the demand of the new wealthy middle classes for education, led to the disappearance of the abuses which had been in evidence even in many of the older endowed schools. With the

appointment of Arnold as head master of Rugby in 1828, a new standard of discipline, of religious and moral tone, raised that school far above its local fame ; and masters trained at Rugby transformed the old and helped to found the new public schools.

There is no definition of a public school. A Public Schools Enquiry Commission in 1861 dealt only with nine old schools ; but others continued to be added to the number recognised as such by public fame, until about 1920, since when the boom in expensive boarding-school education has subsided. At present the only recognised distinctive mark of a " public school " is that its head master is a member, by invitation, of the Head-masters' Conference, the conditions of which are that his school must be of a certain size, must be independent, and must have a certain number of ex-scholars at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Of the 171 schools in England and Wales (and 8 in Scotland) at present on the list, however, at least half are grant aided, and mainly day schools. Indeed, many of the public schools are partly day schools ; others have preparatory departments and so far are not strictly confined to secondary education. Thus the outlines of the " public school " world are blurred a good deal at the edges.

Next come schools neither aided nor recognised by the Board, and here information is scanty. Most of these schools are all-age schools, taking children from 7, or even younger, up to 16 and 18. Some of them are " mushrooms "—here today and gone tomorrow—ill equipped, inefficient ; and it is surprising that they have been allowed to go on unlicensed in spite of the recommendations of the Committee on Private Schools which reported in 1932 that there were about 10,000 private schools, of which less than a quarter had been inspected by L.E.A.s, or by the Board. It went on

to quote evidence it had received from the associations of inspectors and of education committees that many of these schools fell so far short of a reasonable standard of efficiency "that they were a 'public danger' and ought to be closed forthwith". Others are definitely experimental—like that over which presides that notable educational experimentalist, A. S. Neill.

This category of private schools includes many which prepare pupils to enter the "public schools", which they do at 14, by taking the "Common Entrance" examination. The papers set in this examination are common to the examinations recognised by all the "public schools", but each decides its own standard of admission, and the more exclusive public schools decide as much on social as on educational grounds. Of the *Preparatory Schools*, a few are "recognised as efficient" by the Board. Most of them are, however, private ventures, very profitable in good times, and relying on their success at "Common Entrance" for their reputation. Their curriculum is very different from that of the elementary schools attended by other children of the same ages. The main item is Latin grammar, to which much of a boy's general education is apt to be sacrificed.

Constant reference to *examinations* suggests that some brief comment should be made on this matter which has always been a subject of heated controversy in educational circles. All the recognised secondary schools and even, in some degree, many of the others, now work towards two main goals. At 15 or 16 the boys take the *School Certificate*, awarded by one of the universities or groups of universities, which, if a certain standard is achieved in sufficient subjects, carries with it exemption from matriculation—the ordinary university entrance examination. It is strongly contended that because of

the connection with matriculation it has tended to model the school curriculum too closely on university lines, though in theory the School Certificate is supposed to be a test of ordinary success in the work of a secondary school. It was intended, that is, to follow the curriculum, but it has come increasingly to shape it. Accordingly there is a movement, encouraged by the recommendations of the Consultative Committee in the Spens Report, for the separation of the certificate from matriculation ; and the Northern Universities have already taken this step. About 70,000 candidates take the examination every year, of whom about 72 per cent pass : a fact which suggests that there are many pupils in this type of school whose real interests would be better served by a more practical type of education. If some of the fee payers whose parents choose a secondary education, largely for social reasons, could go to a good senior or to a junior technical school, room could thus be found for more of the able but poor children who are at present shut out by the fewness of free places, and it would certainly be better all round.

After the School Certificate stage, in which the boy or girl has had a general education, he or she will either leave school or pass into the Sixth Form and begin a more specialised course. Less than a fifth of those who passed School Certificate survive to pass, two years later, the exacting *Higher School Certificate*, which really amounts to work of the first year of a university course. Some will even stay another year and take "Higher" again, in the hope of getting a sufficiently high place to win a university scholarship. Others will leave at 18 to enter a training college for teachers, for which a good Higher Certificate pass is a qualification, or to go into business or industry.

Thus the work of a secondary school is very largely

dictated by two examinations, and this system is being increasingly criticised. It is true that the schools are well represented on a body which reviews the examinations and advises the Board and the examining bodies —the Secondary Schools Examinations Council. But uneasiness persists and the President of the Board of Education, even in war-time, thought it necessary to set up a strong Committee to report on the curriculum of secondary schools.

Of the pupils leaving secondary schools about one in sixteen of the boys and one in twelve of the girls proceed to a university or training college.[1] Scholarships are to be won from a variety of sources. There are open scholarships and exhibitions at Oxford and Cambridge; and these are being won, in increasing measure, by the ordinary secondary scholar, as distinct from the "public school" boy who once monopolised them. Some schools have scholarship funds in their endowments. Education authorities, with very varying degrees of generosity, supplement such aid. It has been calculated that they aided, in 1938, about 5,000 students, or just under a third of the assisted students who were then in English and Welsh universities. Finally, there are the State scholarships, instituted in 1920, and now numbering 360 each year. These are awarded on the results of the Higher School Certificate examination. From all these sources it comes about that, in 1938, there were 15,754 assisted students in English and Welsh universities, or two out of every five. How many of these came originally from public elementary schools it is not possible to say.

One serious weakness in the secondary school system is the number of pupils who do not complete the School Certificate course, but leave before the age of 16, in spite of the undertaking given by the parents on entry. In

[1] See Laybourne and White, p. 125.

1938 exactly one-quarter of the pupils leaving grant-aided secondary schools left before they were 16. Thus they did not get the full advantage from the opportunity they had received. In many cases, of course, there were reasons which seemed convincing to the parents: a change in family economic circumstances, or the attraction of a job offering good pay. The policy is, however, nearly always a short-sighted one. In good times, it may be thought that a "job in hand" is worth seizing; but the test of long-term advantage, as well as of bad years, proves all in favour of the completion of the full course. Education is the avenue to a fuller life; and that phrase includes the economic aspect of life as well: it means the better job in the sense of security as well as in the sense of interest and suitability to the pupil's capacity. The educationist would wish to see all children's education continued to the age of 16—though not, of course, in the same subjects—so that all may be fully prepared not only for citizenship but for congenial work as well. The "blind alley" job would find no one to fill it, and our economic life would have to be, to that extent, reorganised. In a recent enquiry into the histories of some hundreds of young workers in South Wales who had had over a year's unemployment, it was found that those who were longest unemployed were those who left school at 14. As most children up to 1947 will be leaving school at 14, it becomes important to ascertain what provision is made for the *education of the adolescent.*

There are, unfortunately, too few chances of continued full-time education for the boy or girl with technical rather than literary ability. But one of the successes of our recent history is the *Junior Technical School* to which boys and girls go at 13. About half of them stay till 15–16, and one-third for a year longer. The course is

one which aims at giving the broad basis of a technical education, together with continued general education. They prepare boys chiefly for general constructional trades, and for engineering, and in less degree for other trades ; and girls chiefly for commerce. The total number of pupils is about 28,000, girls numbering just over a quarter. In a world in which new trades and processes, demanding adaptability and capacity to grasp principles rather than routine skill in one craft, are essential, technical education on broad lines becomes more necessary. Hence the proposal of the Spens Committee to set up a new kind of secondary school, the Technical High School. This remains, however, for the present a paper scheme.

As already indicated, the Fisher Education Act (1918) decreed the setting up of compulsory *Day-time Continuation Schools* to be attended for 320 hours a year by all children from the school-leaving age to 16 and, after seven years, to 18. Few of these schools were in being when the economy programme of 1922 suspended the scheme—as events proved, indefinitely : and only in Rugby have these schools continued to be compulsory, though others have been established, in some cases in connection with particular firms. Altogether there were, on the eve of the war, just under 20,000 students. In the absence of an adequate supply of such schools the education of young people after the age of 14 was left to their own voluntary effort after working hours, until the problem of juvenile unemployment became acute, when, in a typically English way, resort was had to emergency measures in the form of *Junior Instruction Centres* or classes, attendance at which was made a condition of unemployment benefit. The value of these centres has varied widely ; in some cases a new type of instructor has shown much ingenuity in meeting this difficult problem. Elsewhere the boys

and girls have been "ins and outs," and nothing very systematic has been achieved. The Act of 1944 imposes the obligation upon Local Authorities to see that provision is made for continuative compulsory education for not less than two half days per week from the age of leaving school to 18. The facilities must be provided during normal working hours, in the employers' time, and there must be no deduction from wages. The provision is to be made in County Colleges and it may be that in agricultural and thinly populated rural areas the provision may need to take the form of short residential courses in winter owing to difficulties of administering a scheme unless it is centralised and outside the period when the agriculturist is tied to the land.

If the neglect of the young workers between 14 and the age of citizenship became a serious matter during the economic depression, the war has made it an issue of national importance and the reaction of the state has been typically palliative. It was realised that the social needs of these young people were as clamant as their more narrowly educational needs, and that the voluntary organisations—clubs, scouts, etc.—were only partly able to meet them. Accordingly the Board of Education set up, in 1939, a National Youth Committee and called upon L.E.A.s to establish local Youth Committees jointly representative of the voluntary bodies and of the Education Committees. It provided for grants on an unusually lavish scale to voluntary organisations providing occupation for "14's to 20's" in their leisure time. Youth Committees have been set up in the area of most of the Education Committees in the county. Various and miscellaneous types of club activities have been fostered; "Youth service squads"—voluntary groups of boys and girls to undertake public service of all kinds, from knitting to cleaning out warden's posts

—have been encouraged ; dances have been organised to attract the " unattached youth " and special encouragement has been given to physical fitness. Informal education is being undertaken for youth movements by the W.E.A., but it has been patronisingly tolerated rather than encouraged. The youth " problem " in its main aspects can be met only by adequate provision of secondary education on the lines of the Hadow and Spens reports—with the school as the centre of " out of school " and leisure activities. The rather undue emphasis being given to the recreational and social aspects of youth work does nothing to solve the problem of apathy toward *Further Education* in the night school or evening institute. Here we find just over half a million young people—a very small percentage of the youth population. The largest enrolments are in English, mathematics, shorthand, dressmaking, physical training and woodwork. The subjects selected suggest a rather wistful return to a school life which, had it been longer, could have made provision for these practical subjects and left the pupil free, after leaving school, to develop wider interests.

It is, of course, essential to the building of a virile democracy that education should be a continuous process and that provision should be made for the adult, to keep him well informed and mentally alert. The main contribution to this end is made by *Adult Education.* This falls into two broad divisions. The number of adults studying in the evening institutes and colleges just described, is over half a million—nearly as many as the adolescents. Many of these are pursuing some vocational aim, or some hobby ; others are taking advantage of the existence of the evening institute to join a class in what is broadly called " non-vocational education " in such subjects as music or languages. The term " adult education " is, however, generally given to a more restricted class of

students—those attending one of the 5,000 classes organised by the Workers' Educational Association in co-operation with universities, on one hand, and trade unions and other working-class bodies on the other, and a number of other courses similarly grant aided by the Board of Education under the Adult Education Regulations. These students have no certificate or promotion in view ; their aim is to get a better understanding of life and society and to cultivate definitely cultural interests in association with other socially minded citizens. Selected students attend residential colleges providing one- or two-year courses of higher study ; one of which, Ruskin College at Oxford, is of course governed by a council representing working-class organisations, including the T.U.C. and the W.E.A.

It only remains to say a few words about *University Education.* Apart from the provision of scholarships and grants for certain specific activities, the Board of Education has no responsibilities in this sphere ; while the L.E.A.s may make grants to universities and have representation on the University Court, but no more. The universities in England, unlike those in many countries, are independent corporations, enjoying a royal charter, but quite autonomous, conducting examinations and granting degrees, with only informal consultations with each other. They are, it is true, financially aided by the State, but the grant is made by the Treasury to the Universities Grants Commission, a body presided over by a distinguished vice-chancellor, and quite separate from the Board of Education. There were, according to the latest pre-war figures, about 40,000 undergraduates in the universities of England and Wales, which number 11, together with 5 university colleges[1] in England, and

[1] Colleges which provide a University course but cannot grant degrees The students take the London University external degree.

the University of Wales with its four colleges of Bangor, Cardiff, Swansea, and Aberystwyth.

Apart from the emergency training scheme to meet the special provision for raising the school age the *Training of Teachers* in this country follows the pattern of the rest of the educational system. It is shared between voluntary training colleges, chiefly church colleges ; those established by L.E.A.s; and on the other hand, the universities. The training colleges are independent institutions, providing a two-years' course for men or women at the age of 18 or 19, at the end of which they take the Teachers' Certificate examination, conducted by regional boards in collaboration with the universities. During their course the students pursue their studies of the ordinary school subjects, which are approached largely from the angle of the prospective elementary school teachers ; though they get an introduction to new subjects, such as psychology. They also have short periods of " school practice ", or teaching in a nearby school under the supervision of the college staff.

The strength of the colleges is the practical nature of their training for the profession of teaching ; their weakness is their limited social environment. The position is exactly reversed in the University Training Departments, which provide a year's training, with a Diploma in Education for students who have already taken a university degree, in spite of the fact that one term is spent as a pupil teacher in a secondary school. On the other hand, the wider contacts of a university are the advantages enjoyed by students trained in this way. It is a defect of the system that four-year grants are given to young people to enable them to take a university degree and diploma ; and that they are thus committed to the teaching profession in advance, although they may develop real abilities for some other career, or show a total unsuit-

ability for teaching. Moreover, the Training Departments prepare students for secondary teaching only, although a high proportion of them are now going into senior elementary schools. The regrading of all senior schools as secondary, which is overdue, should ensure an overhaul of the system of teacher training.

In *Scotland* the educational system is not only different but separate. The Scottish Education Department is entirely independent of the Board of Education ; though it administers a Government allocation to Scottish education which is related, in the proportion of eleven-eightieths, to the total educational expenditure in England and Wales. In Scotland, local education authorities were, until 1929, separately elected bodies ; since that date they consist of thirty-one county councils and four ancient burghs of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Dundee. Since 1918 the school-leaving age has been 14, as in England ; but there is power to grant exemptions at 12 for " employment or to give help in the home ". In 1939–40 the number of children who thus left school before the end of the term in which they became 14 was 5,576. The Act of 1944 applies to Scotland and differs only in detail of administration. One important difference is that the Scottish Education Department makes no direct grant for Adult Education, either to Universities or voluntary bodies.

The educational tradition of Scotland is democratic. The national schools are the " common school " for all classes to a much greater degree than in the south. The difference has received striking emphasis from the adoption in 1939 of a new Code under which all schools are administered ; all children under 12 are regarded as being in primary schools, while all over that age are in secondary schools or departments classified as those giving a three-year course and those giving a course lasting

five years or more. The Code came into effect on the eve of the war, and its full realisation must wait for the raising of the school-leaving age, which was to have occurred simultaneously. Meanwhile, the single Code testifies to a unified educational system, unhampered by those invidious distinctions between schools which are " elementary " and others, for children of the same ages, which are " secondary " and which, in England, distort the educational picture. One great advantage is that in Scotland there is a unified teaching profession. Most men teachers, and a large proportion of women, receive a university training and gain a degree. Some are academically qualified for advanced teaching, and these receive " the rate for the job " : they are not paid according to whether their school is " elementary " or " secondary ". They are all members of a single organisation—the Educational Institute of Scotland—which also includes many university teachers in its rank.

Another unifying factor is that the Church question was settled in Scotland—not in a way that satisfies all concerned, but at least in a way which gets rid of the complications of dual control. The Church schools, mostly, of course, Church of Scotland, whose history goes back to the year 1696, since Scotland had the outlines of a national system of schools centuries earlier than England, were transferred to the State in 1872 ; and the Free Church schools were also transferred under the same Act, which permitted the gift but not the sale of the buildings. The transfer was made on terms which provided for the continuance of the existing system in the matter of religious teaching. In 1918 grants to voluntary schools were abolished. Thus the education authorities plan the system as a whole.

Scotland has, of course, its problems. Many of the schools in the densely packed areas of Glasgow are in

need of replanning and rebuilding. They tend to be much larger, on the whole, than in English towns. At the other extreme are the hundreds of small parishes, where a single teacher keeps up the tradition of generations of " dominies " who taught the youth of the village, of all ages, and found time to give special help to the " lad of parts " who could hope to go to a university.

The four universities are not primarily residential, like the older universities in England ; and, with cheap lodgings, thrifty habits, and, in modern times, aid from bursaries made available for practically any able pupil through the Carnegie endowment, the way was open to the boy from the remotest village. University students number a fraction under 2 per 1,000 of the population, representing double the number in England and Wales.

In *Wales* education comes under the same general system as in England, but the atmosphere has always been more democratic. Thus the number receiving secondary education in 1938 was 18.4 per 1,000, as compared with 11 per 1,000 in England. Those who pay no fees represented 65.6 per cent, against 45 per cent in England.

In the urgency of planning to make up for centuries of neglect, it could hardly be expected that there would be much time for *educational experiment*. The most encouraging experiments in the past quarter of a century have been in connection with the infant and senior departments of school life, and in the development of the medical and welfare services to which the next chapter is devoted. In the infant departments the Montessori method, and the influence of Margaret Macmillan's nursery school experience, have provided a conception of education which might, with equal success, be applied to many other phases of education. The Hadow Committee describe the modern " Infant School not as a place of

instruction, but as an instructive environment". It is the conception of a curriculum in terms of "acitvity and experience" rather than book learning. This is a distinguishing feature of modern education, especially in the new central schools, where practical activities provide scope for "activity and experience" without neglecting other aspects of a liberal education. The most striking of these senior schools are the four village colleges in Cambridgeshire. Like the best of the reorganised senior schools in other rural counties, the village college brings in by 'bus or cycle the children of surrounding villages, and provides an education which makes full use of the rural environment. Its aim is to be the cultural centre for the whole community and to find a properly equipped home for the social and educational activities of voluntary organisations.

Closely related to education through activity and experience is the *Dalton Plan*, the principle of which is that the pupil showing specific interest in certain subjects is provided with a weekly or monthly assignment of work and can spend his time on these subjects independent of time-tables. There has been far too little experiment with this plan, which is obviously supported by two sound educational theories: first, that education thrives best where it arises from the interest of the pupil himself, and second, that the best results follow when the pupil does something for himself and is not spoon fed.

Other experiments are in certain private schools, with new and—to some people—startling educational theories, described best in A. S. Neill's writings. In most of these schools self-expression, self-government and entire freedom from restraint is unreservedly accepted and practised.

It should hardly be necessary to discuss at length the *impact of the war on education*. We still see the results every day. The tragedy is that we cannot estimate the cumula-

tive effects. Hundreds of thousands of children have lost, educationally, in some cases one and in other cases two of the best years of their lives. The results of evacuation and re-evacuation, of closed schools and partially closed schools, of suspension of medical treatment and school meals are all too recent to need recapitulation. What we have to remember is that education—as always—has been one of the chief casualties of the war, and our planning must be bold and courageous if we are to make restitution to the child population for what it has lost and is still losing from a war for which its generation at least has no responsibility.

Chapter III

HEALTH AND WELFARE IN THE SCHOOLS

As we have seen, the conception of education has broadened to a degree that would have amazed our great-grandfathers. This is nowhere more apparent than in the development of the *health and school medical services* in the last thirty years. Yet the level of the physical well-being in our children still leaves much to be desired and is a challenge to complacency. If, of course, it is compared with the position which obtained at the beginning of the century, it provides striking evidence of the deplorable wastage of child life and what has been achieved through the school to check the wastage. The School Medical Service has saved the lives of many thousands of children and has been both a preventive and a cure for many ailments which would have entailed much suffering and, in later life, tremendous loss in the productive capacity of the individual citizen, with the consequent social repercussions on the community. It is the one aspect of our education service which has contributed to the enlightenment and welfare of the child and the parent at the same time. It has set a standard of cleanliness, checked moral delinquencies at an early stage and raised the level of understanding in both school and home life. Nothing has done more to add to the value of other social amenities and to raise the standard of civilisation in the community. It has made education possible for children who, because of the unfortunate afflictions of blindness, deafness or incapacity of speech, would have been denied access to any of the civilising influences of life, and, what is more, it has prevented the growth of these sad afflictions by early discovery and treatment. This is, indeed, the "Silent

Social Revolution" of which Mr. Lowndes has written so eloquently,[1] and shows the road to be taken to establish the health and happiness of our people at a level which will make our present social life look mean and starved. "Never again," said Professor Parsons in his Presidential address to the Anthropological Section of the British Association in 1927,[2] "shall I grudge any taxes which I may be called upon to pay for education, since I realise that, under the cloak of education, London at least is doing its utmost to change a C3 into an A1 population."

As in most developments in English education, the pioneering of a few enlightened local authorities prepared the way for the introduction of the system of medical inspection by the Act of 1907, which imposed on local education authorities the duty of attending to the physical health of school children. Once the Board of Education was equipped with a Medical Branch and the local authorities had their school medical officers, facts were gradually made public which had been previously little realised, except by enlightened teachers struggling with classes of sixty or seventy children, many of whom were dirty, undernourished and ill-clad. The Annual Reports[3] of the Board's first Chief Medical Officer, Sir George Newman, from 1907 onwards, are documents of tremendous social importance, revealing not only the deep-seated malady but the degree to which illness was avoidable by treatment at the early stages. In due course the public conscience was aroused and there were developed around and centred upon the system of School Medical Inspection the series of welfare agencies now grouped together as the "special services" of education.

[1] G. A. N. Lowndes, *The Silent Social Revolution.*
[2] Quoted in *The Special Services of Education in London*, 1929.
[3] *Health of the School Child.*

The *Special* Services had, indeed, already been inaugurated by the Act of 1893, which made compulsory, from the age of 7 to 16, the education of deaf and blind children ; a provision which was extended in 1937 when the age of compulsory attendance for the deaf was lowered to 5. The education of mentally defective and epileptic children was made possible by another Act in 1898, which empowered the School Board of those days to " ascertain " if any of their children were of this type, and to provide for them in special schools and classes. This paved the way to the medical examination of the children, though the provisions of the Act were not made binding on L.E.A.s until 1914. In the meantime, London, in 1890, and Bradford three years later, had already appointed School Medical Officers. Thus the great school medical service had its origin in a few local efforts, restricted to the very limited purpose of remedying serious physical defects ; just as public education itself had originated, as has already been shown, in voluntary initiative, with the narrow aim of preventing the worst moral effects of ignorance. In each case the scope of its influence was to extend far beyond the range dreamed possible by the pioneers. Beginning with the remedial aim of making education possible for the victims of serious and permanent defects—the blind, the deaf, cripples and epileptics—the special services have expanded into a vast service of prevention and positive health. Today, the two activities are complementary to each other. The handicapped child is given special treatment. Where it is humanly possible the deaf are taught to hear, the blind to read, the lame to walk, and what can be done is done to cure or minimise the affliction and to help the children to enjoy and understand the world about them. Meanwhile the normal majority are inspected periodically ; the beginnings of disease are

checked, minor defects remedied, and positive health encouraged. Rather more than one-fifth of those examined are found to require some kind of treatment. All this, of course, assumes the service at its best. There are, indeed, great differences in its organisation from one area to another. An evacuated mother from East London, asked in the course of a B.B.C. talk what she missed in the country, mentioned the advice and guidance of the clinic as one of the deprivations. But if medical services are more readily available in some places than in others, the general effect of their provision is indisputable.

In the London area the proportion of children with sub-normal nutrition fell 6.7 per cent in 1920 to 4.7 per cent in 1933, and similar improvements were observed in other centres. The improvements in nutritional condition were indicated by actual measurement, the boys tested in 1926–35 being 6 lb. heavier and 1 inch taller than those tested in 1909–14.[1] Other examples from the capital may be given. Deaths from measles fell from 8,000 a year in 1893 to a quarter of that number forty years later. The number of girls with infested hair was reduced in fourteen years after 1913 from one-third to one in ten of the total ; and ringworm cases declined from 6,000 in 1911 to 896 in 1927. The school dental service had reduced the number of children requiring dental treatment from 95 per cent to 4 per cent in twenty years. To quote a wider example, in England and Wales it has been calculated that 30,500 children between 5 and 15 died in 1907, the year in which the medical inspection Act was passed, as compared with 21,175 in 1934.

It would be hypocritical to pretend that a passionate

[1] British Association for Labour Legislation (1941), *National Health Services.*

devotion to the physical welfare of the children was the sole inspiration of the school medical service. There were less altruistic motives. War discovers the weaknesses of a nation as well as the strength, and the Boer War—1899–1902—had revealed that of the total number of men examined for military service, 37.6 per cent had to be rejected as physically unfit. This was an alarming revelation to both those who were genuinely concerned about the relationship of the physical well-being of the nation to social progress and to those who were more concerned about the maintenance of recruiting material for the Army. However mixed the motives, there was a common interest and an interdepartmental committee set up in 1904 included as its chief recommendations (1) systemised medical inspection of school children; (2)L.E.A.s to make provision for under-nourished children; (3) establishment of créches for children of employed women; (4) encouragement of physical exercises. This report laid the basis for the 1907 Act. Many factors, such as health insurance, housing, improved sanitation and hospital services, etc., have played their part in social progress, but none has made a better contribution than the school medical services, mainly, of course, because it attacks ill health at—or near—its source. But it is obvious that even in regard to the school medical service we are only at the beginning, if we note the fact that of more than a million and half children examined at routine medical inspections—apart from dental inspections—one in six required some form of treatment, while 70 per cent of the dental inspections revealed defects.

The Board of Education has its Chief Medical Officer —shared with the Ministry of Health—a Senior Medical Officer and a staff of nine other medical officers, besides inspectors of special schools and of meals and several

inspectors of physical training. The L.E.A.s have a school medical officer who, in all but a dozen or so cases, is also the Medical Officer of Health, and a total of 260 full-time and some three thousand part-time school nurses, as well as the part-time service of two thousand district nurses.

The first task of the School Medical Staff is, of course, the regular medical inspection, which is carried out three times (and in London four times) during the elementary school career of each child ; and more than a third of the children are examined in this way every year. In one year there were in London only 150 cases in which parents refused to agree to inspection out of a quarter of a million children, and 65 per cent of those inspected were accompanied by their parents. These routine inspections are supplemented by a large number of special inspections. Often they are handicapped by the very haphazard accommodation in which they must be carried out. It is, however, when we come to the question of treatment that considerable variations are found to exist in the service as between one part of the country and another. There have been changes, in the course of years, in the illnesses which call for most attention. Whereas, for example, thirty years ago rickets was the cause of a great deal of physical deformity and even crippling, serious cases are now uncommon. The incidence of rickets fell, for instance, in Glasgow[1] from 9 per cent in 1910–14 to 1.5 per cent in 1937. Thus the school medical service is able to devote attention to " milder forms of the disease ", which is " due to faulty nutrition in infancy ".[2] Dr. McGonigle, in his challenging book[3] based on a close study of the results of

[1] *The Primary School.* Report of a Committee of the Educational Institute of Scotland, 1939.
[2] *Health of the School Child*, 1937, p. 121.
[3] *Poverty and Public Health*, 1936.

poverty in a depressed town, suggests that marked, if not immediately obvious rickets is much more widespread than the official figures suggest. He found signs of the disease in as many as 94 per cent of the children examined. It is therefore not satisfactory, as the Board points out, that in some fifty areas there are no arrangements for dealing with the deformities and defects of this type which still arise. On the other hand, chronic rheumatism with its insidious attack on the child's heart has become recognised as a much more important and dangerous cause of ill health than was formerly realised. Another example of curable defect which is not everywhere provided for is speech defect. A local enquiry showed that 2 per cent of children were affected, half of them in the form of stammering. Much of this trouble is due to nervousness ; it is affected by other medical defects such as poor eyes, bad teeth and malnutrition. But only a quarter of the L.E.A.s provide the special classes in which the victims can be taught to speak distinctly before confirmed habits have been formed. Some authorities, again, provide X-ray and artificial light treatment, but many do not. The majority now provide at clinic or hospital for chronic tonsillitis or adenoids.

One of the great city L.E.A.s will, of course, be able to provide a varied and flexible service for the treatment of ailments revealed by the routine inspections. The L.C.C. for example, has "a comprehensive scheme for the provision of medical treatment", which makes use of the hospitals, of over seventy treatment centres provided by voluntary local medical committees and financed mainly by the council, local nursing associations, and so on : and some 300,000 children a year were being treated in the years before the war. This includes, on the one hand, serious cases such as tuberculosis, which may involve admission to a sanatorium, or rheumatism,

or dangerous infectious diseases such as diphtheria ; and on the other hand, a visit to the dentist or the provision of a pair of spectacles.

In a single year, 1938, over a million and half children received dental treatment ; and recently the Board of Education has compared the state of the children's teeth in a suburban town with a good dental service, and a Cornish town which, until a year or so ago, had no service. The figures show an extraordinary contrast between a school population with generally healthy mouths and one with a high proportion of bad teeth. It is perhaps natural, in this matter of dental treatment, that parents are most hesitant ; though it is a mistaken policy, and in two out of every five cases treatment is still being refused. On the other hand, the dental staff of many L.E.A.s is quite inadequate to deal with all the cases requiring treatment, even if the parents consented. Twelve years ago Sir George Newman estimated[1] that, if every child needing treatment is to get it, the services of 2,100 full-time dentists (or their equivalent) would be required, instead of 425 whole-time and 584 part-time as at present.

In the matter of eyesight, something like one-half of the eight-year-olds who are examined are unable to pass the test for normal vision ; at 12 the proportion is much reduced.[2] A certain number of these suffer from visual defects, including squint, for which, generally speaking, all possible provision is now made, so that Sir George Newman could claim that " only a very small proportion of children leave school without their visual defects corrected so far as human skill can do this ".[3] Over a quarter of a million children were treated for defective eyesight in

[1] *Health of the School Child*, 1939
[2] *The Special Services in London.*
[3] *Health of the School Child*, 1929, p. 80.

1938. In one year in London 91 per cent of the children needing spectacles were actually supplied ; but such a result is far from universal. The reasons for this are twofold ; it is a question, first of persuasion, and secondly of expense.

The responsibility for treatment lies on the parents, and they are free to ignore the advice given. Moreover, the need for education and persuasion should be obvious ; parents can hardly be expected to realise instantly the full significance of the school doctor's advice. Many of them cannot, or do not, attend at the inspections ; others lack the necessary background of knowledge about health matters. Such authorities as London and Birmingham mobilise the services of a body of voluntary workers through school care committees. In London it was decided in 1909 that every school should have such a committee, and the 6,000 voluntary workers co-operate with the official medical staff of the council ; Birmingham has fifty care committees with 1,200 voluntary workers.

This method of " following up ", as it is called, is not, however, common, and even in London it presents greater difficulties than formerly. There are fewer people today with the leisure to devote to personal visits to the homes of children needing special attention ; and it may be questioned whether, even with the short courses of special training which such workers receive, they are really qualified to deal with some of the health difficulties that arise. In most areas, therefore, school nurses or attendance officers undertake such visits as are necessary. Meanwhile minor ailments arising in the day-to-day life of the school can, in well-organised areas, be dealt with on the spot, the teacher sending the child along to the clinic.

Whatever system is adopted of ensuring that, where

treatment is available, it is received, and that children whose health needs to be kept under continued observation are in fact supervised, the two main obstacles at present are that in the smaller and remoter places the treatment is, in fact, often not available ; and that in most places the cost is liable to be a hindrance. Local education authorities are empowered to recover the cost of medical treatment unless the parent is unable to pay ; and they usually recover at least part of the cost of dental attention, and of the treatment of minor ailments, and supply spectacles at a cheap rate. The cost is generally remitted where the family income is low, but the expense is still liable to prevent, or at least to delay, treatment, while at the same time the small amounts which can be recovered are not worth the time and trouble involved in their collection.

Among remedial measures, mention has already been made of the special schools which provide an education for those who are too deaf to learn in ordinary classes, for the blind, for those with crippled limbs or weak hearts, the epileptic and the mentally deficient. Delicate children need to be in *open-air schools* with an adequate supply of fresh air, sunshine and suitable food. Of these there are now about 150 with accommodation for 15,400. But, while the big authorities—like London with its fleet of ambulance-buses to take children daily to the special schools—can see that this need is met, the case of the occasional pupil with any of these afflictions in the areas of rural or small urban L.E.A.s is much less hopeful.

The same is true of the mentally unstable child—often the child with an unhappy or divided home—who is liable to become the juvenile delinquent or at least to fall out of step and become " backward " in his school-work if he is not given sympathetic and understanding

attention in time. It is here that the *Child Guidance Clinic* renders a valuable service; in those areas where it exists, "the treatment given by medical, psychological and social experts, in consultation with the parents, has proved helpful to many children whose behaviour was causing disquiet to their parents".[1] This method of studying the individual child, in the light of all the complex background of his experience, his health, his home and school life, his dreams or anxieties, is one which, though as yet comparatively little developed, holds much promise for the unhappy child. It is easy to see that many of the troubles of the great evacuation of 1939 might have been avoided by a more understanding approach. In one south-western area, for instance, the trouble of bed-wetting, of which much was heard at the time, was diagnosed by the school medical officer as an ailment, and the consequent handling of these cases was sympathetic and successful.[2] It is seldom, however, that quick and decisive results are obtained in what is largely a matter of restoring a child's confidence and sense of security in his surroundings; and evacuation, which was such a severe disturbance for some children, and for many was liable to be abruptly cut short by recall, was not a favourable opportunity for successful guidance work.

Child guidance is concerned with emotional disturbances; and this leads to some mention of the positive alternative—the provision of favourable conditions for normal emotional development. Happiness is, after all what we want most for our children, and the child that is both healthy and happy is not usually going to be a

[1] *The London Education Service*, 1933.

[2] For a description of a number of cases of unhappy and maladjusted evacuee children and how the child guidance workers were able to help them, the reader is referred to the *Cambridge Evacuation Survey*, ed. Susan Isaacs, ch. 7.

problem child. For emotional health the great need is a sense of security and affection, scope for activity and play. In our cramped towns with their small houses, dangerous streets, and restricted playgrounds, there are too limited opportunities for play. The Education Act enables L.E.A.s to provide *play centres*, both for out-of-school hours and the holidays; to arrange holiday camps; to provide gymnastics, playing-fields and swimming-baths. There is, however, great need for these necessities of healthy growth, and it is only very recently that their provision has been taken seriously by the Board of Education or by any but a few progressive L.E.A.s. Provision for the physical development of elementary school children on these lines is therefore very far from adequate. Here and there, striking experiments point the way to the future. Thus the L.C.C. recently acquired large playing-fields on the outskirts of London and built classrooms there, so that relays of children could spend a day in the playing-field, diversified by lessons, instead of vice versa.

Important as these things are, they would be of little value unless the child is adequately fed, and this brings up to a subject which has now become a science in itself. Progress in the course of a generation has taken us from the old "soup kitchen" with its flavour of charity to the modern *school canteen*. One of the first direct results of the advent of the Labour Party to Parliament in 1906 was a Bill, introduced by a private Labour member, empowering L.E.A.s to give assistance to the voluntary school-feeding societies—which had been at work in some towns for twenty years—so that children unable by reason of lack of food to take full advantage of the education could be fed. The Act also authorised the authority to spend money on the actual meals, if necessary—up to a halfpenny rate; but this limitation was removed in

1914, and it was also made possible to provide meals during holidays.

The history of school meals has, however, been a chequered one. The L.E.A.s had powers to provide them without the consent of the Board of Education; but, in this as in so many aspects of educational policy, the Board has been able in effect to control policy by its decision on the conditions on which its grants-in-aid would be allowed. The Board pays grant on meals provided free of cost, only on conditions which it imposes itself, and in periods of economy, notably by the notorious Circular 1437 issued in 1935—L.E.A.s were instructed to provide free meals only on definite signs of malnutrition being shown. This deplorably short-sighted policy aroused a storm of protest and, incidentally, raised the question of how accurately tests of malnutrition can be applied by examining doctors, all having different standards of assessment. The incidence of serious malnutrition, which has been as high as 10.5 per cent in the poorer parts of London thirty years ago, was now given as less than 1 per cent. These figures were of course criticised. What was the standard adopted? It appeared, from the researches of Mr. R. H. Jones, whose paper before the Royal Statistical Society in November 1937 called forth a reasoned reply in the following year's School Medical Report, that the standard varied with the doctor. A group of boys were examined by different doctors. One found excellent nutrition in 17 out of 142 cases; another in only one case. One found 24 boys subnormally nourished; another 38. Thus a boy could be found subnormal by one doctor, excellent by another. In another experiment, one doctor found three subnormal boys out of 100; another found 90! Again, where five doctors each examined 193 boys twice at an interval of seven days, they placed one boy in four, on

the average, in a different grade at the second inspection. The method of clinical assessment of nutrition was, therefore, very defective ; and no more reliable method was known.

From a different angle Dr. McGonigle approached the problem by examining the actual money available for food in a town in Durham where he had noticed that health was worse among families rehoused on a new housing area than in the slums they had left. He deduced that high rents had driven them below the margin, and he found that the net family income was not sufficient to provide a nutritive diet, so that under-nourishment was inevitable.[1]

Opinion has thus slowly come back to the view that the only way to ensure against malnutrition is to ensure adequate school feeding. It has, however, taken a war to change the policy of the Board of Education, effectively ; though the " Milk in Schools " scheme, which was the first step in the right direction, came before the war —as a means of subsidising agriculture ! The change in policy was so drastic that the Board must be given credit for bowing to the " many communications " which it admitted had been received. The actual wording of the effective paragraph in Circular 1443 is worth placing on record :

> The Board are concerned to secure that all children who are unable by reason of lack of food to take full advantage of the education provided for them should receive such supplementary nourishment as may be appropriate in each case, the meals being provided free where the parent is unable to pay. For this purpose in their view provision may properly be made for *any child who shows any symptoms, whether educational or physical, however slight.*

There was still a little of the " Old Adam " in the new

[1] McGonigle and Kirby, *Poverty and Public Health.*

penitent and the circular insisted that a low family income did not in itself justify free meals and that the actual condition of the child must be taken into account. By October 1941, however, the Board's conversion was complete and it adopted a policy in line with national needs by issuing Circular 1567. This provided that in order to secure and maintain a high standard of nutrition among School children under war conditions it now aimed at "the provision of school meals on a much larger scale" and an increase from 60 to 100 per cent in the number of children taking milk in school. To this end the grant for school meals was raised to a minimum of 70 and a maximum of 95 per cent. The final demise of the old policy was effected by the clause :

> Since the aim of these proposals is to maintain a high standard of nutrition and to prevent malnutrition, rather than to remedy it after symptoms have appeared, Authorities may in future base their provision of free milk and free or part-payment meals solely on evidence of financial need.

The effects of the Board's previous lukewarm attitude, however, are very apparent in statistics. On the eve of the war there were still nearly 40 L.E.A.s which provided no free meals or milk ; and, though they were in areas with only 5 per cent of the school children of the country, they included three county boroughs.[1] Of the remainder, 121 authorities provided free milk only. There were, in all, 635,174 children receiving free milk and 176,767 receiving free meals. In addition, about half the total number of elementary school children were receiving milk at reduced price under the milk-in-schools scheme. When war came, all these figures were sharply reduced. Schools were closed, the children were scattered ; later

[1] *Health of the School Child*, 1938.

on bottles of the usual one-third of a pint size became unobtainable in some areas. The Board's new policy comes, therefore, none too soon.

The *school canteen* has an importance of its own. It provides not merely a meal but a properly balanced meal. It is a valuable part of a child's education, on the social side, as well as meeting the special cases of children who have distances to travel to school, or whose parents are out at work, and who would otherwise have to eat sandwiches in the classroom. Shortly before the war[1] there were still 14 out of 48 counties not providing school canteens, mainly because they had not begun their schemes of rural re-organisation. The necessities of war-time have stimulated the developments which proceeded so slowly in peace-time, and in November 1941 the President of the Board of Education stated[2] that about a thousand new school canteens or extensions, providing for 140,000 children, had been put forward in the previous six months. There still remains much leeway to be made up ; and there remains the necessity of ensuring that, with the end of the war, policies of economy do not undo all that has been done. Undernourishment is an important factor in Education—so much so that a special inspection of secondary school pupils at Spennymoor in Durham and Surbiton in Surrey showed a difference of a year's growth between those in the depressed north and those in the more prosperous south.[3]

Another important factor of hardly less importance, is the provision of warm *clothing* and sound *boots*. In particular cases of poverty, and especially in periods of depression, magistrates have had to deal with parents

[1] *Hansard*, December, 1937.
[2] *Hansard*, November, 20th, 1941.
[3] *Health of the School Child*, 1936, p. 31.

prosecuted for keeping their children away from school where the excuse has been that the children had no adequate footwear, and teachers have had to "keep in" children at playtime whose boots hardly held together. In Scotland the sensible system obtains under which the L.E.A. is able to equip the needy child to come to school in the same way as it has power to provide meals and milk where necessary. In the last pre-war year over 84,000 children were supplied with footwear or clothing or both, and in 531 cases the parents were able to refund the cost. In 1939–40, owing to the decline in unemployment, the numbers were down to 72,000.[1] In England and Wales, the education authorities, through the Association of Education Committees, have repeatedly asked for power to provide footwear, and the L.C.C. in September 1937 passed a resolution asking for a 50 per cent grant for this purpose. Lord Stanhope, then President of the Board, replied that they would next be asking for power to provide houses ![2]

The Association of Education Committees thereupon undertook an enquiry into the working of the existing arrangements under which the Public Assistance Committee was responsible, and it found that liaison between these bodies and the education committees was small, and that the position would be even worse, but for the work of voluntary agencies. The war has made the situation more acute. As a teacher, speaking at a Conference in May 1941, put it: "There is an urgent need for a simple and direct system for clothing school children. Their fathers are away; the foster parents cannot afford boots and clothes; and there are seven or eight forms for the teacher to fill up and send to different

[1] *Report on Education in Scotland*, 1939, p. 19.
[2] *Education*, November, 1937.

authorities." [1] What can be done under such a system has, perhaps, been most effectively done in Newcastle-on-Tyne, where the Director of Education devised a working scheme, but his experience only proves the necessity for new powers to be given to the education authorities.

Under the general heading of Health and Welfare, the Annual Reports of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education usually include a chapter on the "Care of the Young Child" or "The Pre-school Child". The *Nursery School* has a broader purpose than merely physical welfare, though its importance in this respect is best illustrated by Sir George Newman's plea for early medical supervision on the grounds that, in the main, the elementary school is "a receiver of damaged goods."

The *Nursery School* meets the needs of the children, from 2 to 5, providing them with the conditions for healthy development, social and psychological as well as physical. They learn to interpret the shapes and colours and sounds which surround them, to control their muscles, to co-operate with others as well as to be self-reliant. They learn how to play and how to sleep and to recognise cleanliness as a natural habit.

The nursery school owes most to the inspiring example of Rachel and Margaret Macmillan, who showed what could be done to train healthy and happy children in a poor dockside area at Deptford, with no elaborate school buildings. The Rachel Macmillan school now continues, through its training of nursery school teachers, to exercise a powerful influence on the education of young children.

Sir George Newman repeatedly urged development. He pointed out that there were something approaching two million children aged between 2 and 5, "for whose

[1] *Educational Problems in War-Time* (W.E.A.), p. 24.

nurture and education there is no proper medical provision. One-quarter to one-third of the children admitted to school at 5 are in need of medical attention before they can receive the education which the State provides for them". In one Report, Sir George Newman says, "the age under five is the susceptible age for *body and mind*; it is the crucial age, psychologically as well as physically".[1] Yet progress has been tediously slow. Powers to provide nursery schools were given to L.E.A.s by the Act of 1918. Ten years later there were 28 (including 15 voluntary schools) with accommodation for 1,648 children. After another ten years there were, in 1938, 118 schools (63 council and 55 voluntary), accommodating 9,504 children. It is a snail's pace of progress, which, alas, has been brought to a halt once again. The war was an urgent challenge to do all that could be done for young children; but new nursery schools have not been sufficiently encouraged by the Board, various makeshift alternatives have been suggested to meet a need which other Departments, especially the Ministry of Labour, have pointed out.

Before mentioning these new measures, however, something ought to be said about the peace-time alternative—the *Nursery Class*. Some authorities—notably Manchester—have preferred the cheaper method of providing for children aged 3 to 5, by nursery classes in the infant schools. Out of 20,000 children of these ages in Manchester in 1938, 6,000 were in the infant schools; and 1,500 of these were in nursery classes. There are, of course, important differences. In the nursery class no midday meal is provided and the age of admission is 3 instead of 2. Again, many nursery school teachers emphasise the the value of a self-contained community for the little children away from the more formal school

[1] *Health of the School Child*, 1928, p. 46.

atmosphere and the relatively "grown up" world of the infant school. About these differences there has been much debate, but there is widespread agreement about the desirability of providing much more adequately for the under-fives, in conditions which ensure their healthy growth, both physical and psychological; and the nursery school has shown how this can be done. Some would even go so far as to say that the nursery school should be carried right through the infants' stage, from 2 to 7; and successful experiments on these lines have been made at Bradford.

War-time experiments have arisen chiefly from Evacuation, which called for residential nursery schools, and from the heavy demands for women workers, which have taken young mothers into the factories. To meet the calls of the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Health seems to have taken the lead and the Board of Education —still slow where the under-fives are concerned—has followed.

In the reception areas there has evolved a scheme for "*Nursery Centres*" described as "something between a Day Nursery and a Nursery School".[1] These are primarily for the "evacuees", and in some centres friction arose when the foster parents were not allowed to send their own children. The Circular from the Board and the Ministry of Health contained a considerable amount of useful information, and made suggestions for the setting up of nursery centres for small groups of ten to twenty children, and for keeping them happily occupied. In fact, however, very little came of it. Responsibility was divided between the L.E.A. and the local welfare authorities; both were heavily burdened with tasks arising from evacuation; there was no drive

[1] *Circular 1459* (Board of Education and Ministry of Health): *Nursery Centres in Reception Areas.*

from the centre, and very few nursery centres resulted until the Nursery School Association undertook the responsibility of organising them in certain areas.

When the call for women's labour became more insistent a new scheme was worked out. The "*War Nurseries*" which began in the summer of 1941 were an extension of the nursery centre idea to the industrial areas. They are the responsibility of the welfare authorities—not the education authorities. In Manchester, however, the council decided that the "two to fives" should be in the care of the Education Committee and should be admitted to nursery classes, which are to extend their provision, including a midday meal, longer hours, etc., to meet the needs of the mothers in industry. Thus Manchester has safeguarded the all-round interests and not merely the physical safety of the children. Altogether, the war nursery has been severely criticised as a makeshift; and care must be taken to see that it does not become the standard for post-war "economists" in approaching the problem of the needs of the young children. War sets back, inevitably, the progress of education. Whatever reforms we may have promised ourselves "after the war", the children of today are losing much on the educational side. We must make sure that the loss is not more than it need be. The essential thing is skilled and understanding guidance by trained teachers. While neglect of health is criminal, the development of the mind and personality of the child is the ultimate reality for the sake of which, of course, physical well-being must be safeguarded. The Act of 1944 extends the school health services. From September 1st, 1946, two-thirds of a pint of milk was available free of charge to all children of school age and not the least satisfactory result of the proposal in regard to part-time education up to 18 years of age is that the adolescent as

well as the child will be under the care, so far as health is concerned, of the Education Authority. The provision of school canteens supplying free meals is no longer optional but is a statutory duty imposed on the local authority.

Chapter IV

EDUCATIONAL LIMITATIONS—DEMOCRACY'S FAILURES

WITHIN the limits of restricted space, the development of the national system of education has been outlined. It is now necessary to retrace our steps a little to see how the slow development of educational reform and the meagre provision of educational opportunity have retarded social progress.

Political democracy in this country has been extended in a century from a privilege conferred upon a selected few to the common heritage of all adults who care to share it. If our political system were judged by the letter rather than the spirit of the Constitution, it could be argued that we had all the essential political machinery for making the desert blossom as the rose, but the desert has not blossomed. It has remained barren and we have suffered a sense of frustration as we have compared our visions of what we expected to achieve through the machinery of democracy, with the actual results. Political democracy has functioned so slowly, when it has functioned at all, that its most ardent supporters have needed all their faith and imagination to defend it as the ideal form of government.

It is a simple and logical fact, that the most perfect. machinery of any kind may be as useless as scrap iron unless there is, first, the will to use it, and, second, the skill and knowledge necessary to use it for the purpose for which it was designed.

Thus the important question is whether democracy would have been quite effective if those who were entrusted with the task of using the machinery had been willing to use it and capable of understanding it? This

could only be decided if the machinery itself were examined, and also the kind of training which had been given to those who were expected to exercise control.

History overflows with records of brief experiments in self-government in religious, social and economic affairs, but the basis of our existing political democracy had no real form or substance until the franchise was conferred upon the common people and the fruits of that concession only matured fully as late as 1928, when the 1918 Representation of the People Act was amended to give women equality of franchise with men. Thus the political democracy which concerns us was the product of the nineteenth century, though it owed much of its inspiration to the French Revolution in the later years of the previous century.

The whole history of political reform in this country can be compressed into the period between 1832 and 1918. Indeed, unless we believe that it was possible for the will of the people to be fully expressed while excluding most of the women of the country, we could argue that democracy was not fully articulate until 1928. However willing or unwilling the common people may have been to use the machinery of political democracy, they were not really allowed to do so until the beginning of the present century.

The first Reform Bill of 1832 endowed the rising middle classes with the vote. Its supporters actually claimed "that it called in the middle class to the defence of property".[1] The rateable value of £10 for boroughs certainly excluded the low-paid workers of the period, while farm workers and miners were expressly excluded. In fact, the total electorate up to 1866 was only one million. The second Reform Bill in 1867 increased the electorate to two millions by accepting the principle of

[1] J. L. Hammond, *Town Labourer*.

household suffrage, but it still left unenfranchised the farm labourers, most of whom lived in tied cottages. Whereas after the first Reform Bill only one in six of the male adult population had a vote, the electorate increased by two-thirds under the Reform Act of 1884 and was four and a half million by 1886, though considerable numbers of men and all women, except householders over 30 years of age were still excluded in a population at that time of twenty-seven and a half millions. The Representation of the People Act, 1918, brought in all women over 30 years of age, and by 1928 we had complete suffrage.

It would have been a miracle had political democracy functioned satisfactorily. It is a plant which has only grown to maturity during the lifetime of the present electorate, and this and the misconception of its aim and purpose explains its failure. Until recent years, political democracy was viewed as an end in itself, instead of a means to an end. The middle-class liberal of the nineteenth century agitated for the extension of the franchise as a means of access to civil and religious liberty, freedom from legal restraint, the maintenance of free trade and, as far as possible, free labour.

The trade unionist in the latter part of the nineteenth century had little conception of the economic power which was inherent in political democracy. It was only at the beginning of the twentieth century that he recognised that political independence through direct representation in Parliament was more effective than fruitless strikes, and petitions, to, and lobbying of, philanthropic members of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons.

The fact that political democracy could be the avenue leading to equality of economic opportunity and social security has been far more readily appreciated by those

whose vested interests were challenged than by the masses of the people themselves. This explains why political democracy was unopposed so long as it was an instrument for minor but necessary social reforms, but violently opposed when, through readjustments in the distribution of wealth through taxation, a wide extension of the social services and increasing trends toward legislation which imposed greater control over industry, it became a challenge to the whole basis of the economic system. But the opposition to political democracy does not explain the whole story. Political reform was usually conceded a little in advance of educational reform. It has not been exactly a race between the hare and the tortoise, but rather of two tortoises, with political reform always a fraction of a length ahead.

The nineteenth-century reactionary governments appeared to see nothing illogical in denying the workers educational opportunities on the grounds that education would create an atmosphere of political unrest and sedition, while, at the same time, denying political opportunity on the grounds that if they were entrusted with the vote they would be too ignorant to know what to do with it.

The modern version of the same argument can be found in the story of the Public Assistance Committee, which argued that the man who had not been thrifty did not deserve assistance and that the man who had been thrifty did not need it.

If the dates when concessions in political and educational reforms were granted are set out, they assume special interest, having regard to the simple fact that the proper use of political power is so dependent upon education. While the facts have already been stated, they are all the more striking when set out in parallel columns :

Political Reform		*Educational Reform*	
First Reform Bill .	1832	First State grant for Education, £20,000	1833
Second Reform Bill .	1867	Forster Education Act	1870
Third Reform Bill .	1884–5	Balfour Education Act	1902
Representation of the People Act . .	1918	Fisher Education Act	1918
Representation of the People Act . .	1928	Bill to raise age to 15	1936
		"Butler" Education Act . . .	1944
		(Raising school age to 15—1947)	

It is not suggested that political democracy would necessarily have been perfect had the educational reforms come first and the political reforms second. The intention is to emphasise that, due to the utterly inadequate educational background of most of those who were expected to exercise political judgment, it was inevitable that the democracy should express itself ineffectively. It had not been thought necessary to provide the masses with either the quantity or the quality of educational opportunity which would have ensured the normal functioning of the new political system.

Two years after the passing of the first Reform Bill (1832), the Factory Commission Report of 1834 produced figures showing the extent of illiteracy in the industrial areas. Their statistics were based upon returns from factories in Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cheshire. The proportions of factory workers who were unable to *read* were—Lancashire 17 per cent, Yorkshire 15 per cent, and Cheshire 10 per cent, while those unable to *write* reached the astounding proportions of 62 per cent, 52 per cent, and 53 per cent, respectively. Even as late as 1841, Mr. J. L. Hammond states in his *Town Labourer* that there were 40 per cent of the men and 65 per cent of the women in Lancashire and Cheshire married, or witnessing marriages, who could not sign

their own names to the marriage register, while the same author provides evidence that in 1842, in an area comprising Oldham and Ashton, with a population of 105,000, there was not a single public day school for poor children. In the same period, "colliers" children in counties like Derbyshire were expressly debarred by rule, from attending even such schools as existed. Evidence of these scanty opportunities were to be later supplied by the Newcastle Commission, to which reference has already been made. After an enquiry lasting over the three years 1858–61, the members of the Commission reported that more than 40 per cent of the children had attended school for less than one year. We were then on the eve of our second Reform Bill.

There is, of course, no evidence that had the masses of the people been endowed with full political power by the Reform Bills of 1832 and 1867, they would have immediately used their power to demand substantial educational reform. In fact, all the evidence is to the contrary. Our attitude toward education is invariably decided by our experience of it, and the few who had been more the victims than the beneficiaries of a "system" which combined the evils of charity, patronage, parsimony and oft-times brutality, held obviously limited conceptions of its possibilities and showed no enthusiasm for extending it. Indeed, any Parliament which desired to do nothing to further educational reform could always claim that there was no popular demand for it. Thus for more than a generation after it should have been abolished, the half-timer system was allowed to continue and factory owners were able to profit by exploiting the children and escaping public criticism, by emphasising that it was the parents themselves who were the strongest opponents of abolition. This, of course, was all too true, the parents, indeed, having little choice, especially during the early part of the century, when according

to J. L. Hammond, weavers' wages in the Manchester district were as low as 4*s.* 10*d.* per week.

Yet in spite of widespread illiteracy, the nineteenth century produced an enormous number of working men whose intelligence, genius and personality fitted them for leadership in the industrial, political and social movements of the period—movements which, in most cases, they both initiated and inspired. These were the men who secured freedom of association and the right to combine for collective bargaining for the modern Trade Union Movement. They laid the foundations of the Co-operative Movement and educated their fellow workers, as far as they could do so, in the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, in preparation for the political equality for which they were then vainly struggling, through the Chartist and other movements.

Not the least emotionally moving aspect of the nineteenth-century life is the endless procession of great figures who, at first, received no help in their passionate struggle for knowledge except that provided by their own determination and courage. Our nineteenth-century novelists give us pathetic examples in books like Kingsley's *Alton Locke*, George Eliot's *Adam Bede*, and the more modern Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*. But the biographer introduces the historic figure himself. Graham Wallas, in his *Life of Francis Place*, quotes him as saying :

> My desire for information was, however, too strong to be turned aside and often have I been sent away from a book-stall when the owner became offended at my standing reading, which I used to do until I was sent away. . . . I used to borrow books from a man who kept a small shop . . . leaving a small sum as a deposit.

At the age of twenty, Place had worked through the histories of Greece and Rome and some translated works of Greek and Roman writers. When unemployed

and for many months practically starving, he read many volumes in history, politics, law and philosophy, Adam Smith and Locke, and especially Hume's *Essays and Treatises*. He says :

> I taught myself decimals, equations, the square cube and biquadrate roots. . . . I was sometimes brought to a standstill. I knew no one of whom I could ask a question or receive any kind of instruction and the subject was at times very painful.

For men whose normal working day was twelve to fourteen hours, educational experience could only be acquired at the cost of blood, sweat and tears. Cooper, the Chartist, gives an example of this in his *Autobiography*. He says :

> Historical reading, or the grammar of some language or translation was my first employment on week day mornings, whether I rose at *three or four*, until seven o'clock when I sat down to the stall . . . breakfast gave me another half hour's reading. I had another half hour or sometimes an hour's reading or study of language from one to two o'clock at dinner time. I sat at work until eight, sometimes nine at night. I then either read or walked about our little rooms and committed *Hamlet* to memory or the rhyme of some other poet, until compelled to go to bed through sheer exhaustion.

A race of giants like Place and Cooper would have equipped themselves in spite of all difficulties. Such a race would have been capable of accepting the responsibilities as well as the privileges of democratic citizenship. But we are not a race of giants. Self-education demands a discipline few can acquire. The majority had to be taught and, as has been seen, neither the educational provision available nor the character of the education itself, were designed to develop the independent thought and judgment essential if the machinery of political democracy was to run smoothly.

There were others, however, who, while lacking the spartan self-discipline of men like Place and Cooper, had an intense thirst for knowledge and a willingness to learn from others. The Sunday schools, first established by Griffiths Jones, a Welsh minister, in the eighteenth century, and later the adult schools, founded by Quakers in Bristol in 1812, had taught thousands of adults to read and many to write, but the most potent force were the mechanics institutes, founded by Dr. G. Birkbeck in Glasgow, to spread by 1851 to 600 institutes, with 600,000 members and over 16,000 students.

The purpose of the institutes was to interest the mechanic and artisan in "such branches of science as are of practical application to the exercise of his trade". There was little opposition to this kind of education, which had the effect of producing better workmen, but there were critics. On the one hand, it was claimed that "it would soon enable the worker to tread on the heels of the rich", while from the opposite point of view the leading Chartists wanted "an education which would teach us something of our social rights and responsibilities". The institutes, however, did make a valuable contribution to social progress. They brought together the more enlightened of the workers who, later, were to develop a sense of social responsibility. Some of our best known technical colleges, such as Huddersfield and Manchester, developed from mechanics institutes. Birkbeck College, now one of the University of London colleges, takes its name from the founder, Dr. Birkbeck.

It is of importance to emphasise that the institutes were at the zenith of their power while they concentrated on classes for serious-minded students. There was the constant clash between those who favoured the organised study in classes and those who desired to turn the institutes into agencies for providing popular and entertaining

lectures. The latter group won the day. The result was a process of degeneration.

> Many of them ceased to be mechanics institutes in anything but name—as the interest of the working-class members flagged, mechanics dropped out and middle-class people came in. In Manchester, where special efforts were made to retain working-class members, the average number from 1835 to 1841, was 309 out of 1,184 members.[1]

It was the influence of the London Mechanics Institute which had inspired the passion for education in William Lovett. To the end of his life, Lovett proclaimed his belief that education was the foundation of social progress, and although he did not realise it at the time, his work *Chartism*, written from prison in 1840, prophesied with some accuracy the administrative methods which now govern the national educational system in general, and adult education in particular. He claimed that "it should be administered by locally elected bodies, free, and at the public cost". For adult education he advocated "travelling libraries and missionaries", the modern interpretation of which would be organising tutors.

In the meantime, intellectuals like Ruskin, Thomas Hughes, Lowes Dickinson and Neale, Maurice and others, had allied themselves with the struggling working-class movements and were co-operating in the effort to provide education which would enable working-class leaders to equip themselves for their tasks.

The Co-operative Movement made its first contribution through the well-known experiment of the Rochdale Pioneers, who established an educational fund and counted education as one of the principal objectives of the society. The principle was copied by other societies and has now become general. Perhaps the Co-operative

[1] Report of the Adult Education Committee, Ministry of Reconstruction, 1919.

Movement made an even more important contribution to workers' education when, along with leaders of the Trade Union Movement, it made demands to share the cultural heritage of the universities and organised for its own members, lectures provided by scholars of national repute. The University Extension Movement reponded, glad to seize this opportunity of direct contact with working-class life. The university lecturers admitted that the educational benefits were mutual. Commencing in 1872, the University Extension Movement could claim that it represented the first national effort to provide opportunities for the liberal education of the worker in the humanities, and to this effort we owe the inspiration leading to the foundation of the Workers' Educational Association in 1903, the initiative being taken by leaders of the Trade Union and Co-operative Movements and the Working Men's Club and Institute Union.

Educational interest and provision to meet it were growing; both were far from satisfactory and the position in the last quarter of the nineteenth century is best described by Mr. H. G. Wells, who relates his own experience in *Homo Sapiens :*

> I have heard other people who have had similar experiences to mine tell of the *thirst for knowledge* they experienced. I suppose I had that thirst in good measure, but far stronger was my anger at the paltry sham of an education that had been fobbed off upon me; angry resentment also at the dismal negligence of the social and religious organisations responsible for me, that had allowed me to be thrust into the hopeless drudgery of a shop, ignorant, mininformed, under-nourished and physically under-developed, without warning and without guidance, at the age of thirteen. To sink or swim. I was too young to make allowances for the people who were exploiting and stifling me. I did not realise that they were quite charming people really if a little too self-satisfied and indolent ! I thought they had

conspired to keep me down. But I was down and they didn't bother. They took my inferiority as part of the accepted order. They trod on me. But I did not discriminate about their responsibility. I hated them as only the young can hate, and it gave me the energy to struggle, and I set about struggling, for knowledge. I was bitterly determined to see my world clearer and truer before it was too late.

The twentieth century dawned more hopefully. An electorate more nearly vocal than at any previous period, with educational opportunity guaranteed, in the words of the Balfour Act, to ensure that no child should be denied educational opportunity because of the poverty of his parents. This intention showed a spirit of goodwill which, had it been carried into effect, would have been excellent. Indeed, it would have been revolutionary. It is now nearly forty years since we affirmed, in principle, a doctrine of equality of educational opportunity. What a different world we might have been living in had that principle been carried into practice. If children had *not* been denied educational opportunity because of the poverty of their parents the whole social structure of society might have been different. It is conceivable that had our practice been as good as our precept we might have had today a generation of young and middle-aged people capable of understanding and effectively working the machinery of political democracy.

The pledge in the Balfour Education Act has not been honoured. Educational opportunities have been provided for all, but not equal opportunities. The facilities have been measured out according to the capacity of the parent to pay. A selective test has been imposed on an otherwise democratic educational system, based not on ability to profit by education but on the capacity to pay for it.

There may be critics who, while in agreement with our claim for equality of educational opportunity, would agree that however perfect the educational system, political democracy cannot function so long as it fails to offer equality of economic opportunity and to guarantee social security. There may be some truth in this, but it is not wholly true. Equality of economic opportunity and social security cannot be imposed by a benevolent government and, if they were, could only be permanent in a community whose education had kept pace with its increased responsibilities. For, equality of economic opportunity and social security would impose responsibilities as well as confer privileges. Neither equality of economic opportunity nor social security are automatic developments. They depend upon the wise exercise of political responsibility, and that is essentially dependent not only upon adequate educational opportunities, but even more, upon the quality of the education provided.

The educational provision of the nineteenth century was short-measured. That of the twentieth century has been short-sighted. It is true that we have made enormous progress in educational provision in the past twenty-five years. But there is no justification for complacency. On paper the structure is imposing. There is need for nursery school provision for some two million children in the age group 2 to 5. We accommodate less than ten thousand. We shall soon claim to provide primary education for all children between 5 and 15 years, at which age seven-eights of them cease compulsory education. One in eight used to trickle through the sieve into the secondary school or to a junior technical school, and one in every thousand of the more fortunate may find a place in a university. There should be no illusions about this. Extended years of school life would not provide the guarantee that we had solved the problems

of inertia and apathy which stultify the progress of democracy. At times, one is conscious of a curious embarrasment in justifying our enthusiasm for extended educational facilities, when we note the negative influence which education appears to have had on many for whom it has been purchased expensively and provided luxuriously. Political ineptitude is not confined to adults who have had to finish their formal education at 14 years of age, and if one had to decide between a sound education and a lengthy one, there should be no hesitation in preference for the former. Unfortunately, so far, the twentieth century has produced neither. As each year passed, upwards of half a million children left our schools at 14 years of age, giving support to the criticism that we do not believe in a long education, and as if to demonstrate our contempt for a sound one, we tolerate a modern version of the obnoxious monitorial system by condemning approximately three-quarters of the primary school population to classes consisting of thirty to sixty children. Of course we have substituted the fully trained and qualified teacher for the monitorial robot, but while we have 54,198 classes of thirty to forty children, 42,481 with between forty and fifty, and even 2,077 with between fifty and sixty, the work of the teacher is diluted by monitorial functions. Out of a total of 145,281 classes in elementary schools, 98,779 consisted on March 31st, 1938, of over thirty children.[1] What should be a profession of high calling has, quite unnecessarily, become a routine of drudgery to many teachers and children alike.

With an inconsistency which is one of our national characteristics, we prescribe that in secondary schools the number per class should not exceed thirty, although there were on October 1st, 1938, 4,747 classes exceeding

[1] Report of the Board of Education, 1938.

the normal number, but we have thought it unnecessary to legislate for numbers in primary school classes, presumably on the assumption that the younger the children are, the easier it is to educate and control them. That, at least, is a complete fallacy. The good builder considers the foundation of greater importance than the roof.

The disadvantage of overcrowded classes is not lessened by the fact that many of them meet in architecturally antiquated school premises, all too often sunless and insanitary, judged by modern standards. A well known ex-H.M. Inspector of Schools, Dr. F. H. Spencer, has estimated that at least 80 per cent of our elementary schools are quite unsuited for modern education, while the report of the Board of Education for 1938 records the fact that 844 schools still remain on the original "black" list.

Those who are impatient, and anxious to see political democracy working effectively, would probably admit all the existing defects in the educational system, but argue that, if we have to wait until those defects are remedied, we shall not see an effective democracy for many years to come. Is there no shorter cut? Cannot we make up for the deficiences of the present system and the neglect in the past by further education of the adolescent and the adult? That was the dream of a few hopeful pioneers who formed the Workers' Educational Association nearly forty years ago. Sir Richard Livingstone, in a thoughtful study on *The Future in Education*,[1] takes the view that a wide extension of adult education is the solution of political apathy, and that if there were more and greater variety of adult educational facilities available we could stimulate a revival of educational enthusiasm among the masses.

[1] Published by the Cambridge University Press. Special W.E.A. edition, 1*s.* 6*d.*

The problem is not quite so simple. It is not a question of extending provision. The problem is to stimulate interest in the facilities which already exist. It would be true to claim that where a sense of moral responsibility —the first essential of political democracy—has been created, it has been, in the main, among those who have " come back " to education after reaching the adult stage in life, recognising that if they were to play their part in democratic movements and institutions they must equip themselves for it. But these, important as they are in that they equip themselves for leadership, only represent an infinitesimal number compared with the huge, apathetic and disinterested mass.

A study of the Board of Education Report, already referred to, reveals a variety of provision for further education which, if advantage had been taken of it, would have made a substantial contribution to the defects in the early education of the generation which is now exercising political responsibility.

If all who have taken advantage of any form of part-time further education, whether provided by university, art, technical or literary institutes or voluntary organisations such as the W.E.A. are added together, it would be found that in the records of the best year less than one in twelve of the insured population took any advantage of the facilities available and that, of those who did so, only 1 out of every 108 students were interested in any of the social sciences. A fraction over two-thirds of the students followed courses of a professional or vocational character and the balance between the remainder was fairly evenly divided between domestic science and physical training, with a small residue interested in cultural subjects. These estimates exclude W.E.A. and university extra-mural classes, 63 per cent of which were in social science subjects, but W.E.A. and university

classes represented only 60,000 students[1] out of a total of nearly 1,250,000 enrolments.

These details have been given at the risk of wearying the reader, because it is thought important to ascertain to what extent the adolescent and adult population has developed an interest in further education and, where it has done so, how far this has been related to utilitarian ends or to the study of those subjects directly, or even indirectly, related to citizenship and political responsibility. These facts clearly show widespread apathy which is certainly not due to any lack of provision. It is much more clearly related to the failure of early education and to the prejudices which survive in the mind of the adult, arising from his early experiences. It is a commonplace to claim that if a thing is too cheap we soon despise it. We certainly do if it is both cheap and nasty, as much of our past educational effort has been. There is little hope for a wide extension of interest in adult education of any serious character, until we have produced the first generation which, on leaving school, is able to respect and love the educational content of its school experience. Such a generation will need no inducement to continue its education after leaving school. If the attention it deserved had been given to building up a complete and liberal educational system, it would not be necessary to plead with the adult to return to the fold. He would proceed to adult education as one of the natural processes of a complete education. In the last century, we all but denied the right of the child to an education of any kind. In the early part of this century it was provided so grudgingly that we have no right to express surprise when we find that it is not popular. Even within the last ten years we have alternated between meagre advances in educational reform

[1] 100,000 in 1946.

and panic economies with Geddes axes and May committees to undertake the shady work.

It is interesting to speculate what might have happened had the Fisher Act of 1918 been fully implemented. Suppose we had had compulsory part day-time continuative education up to 18 years of age, as Fisher intended? It is almost startling to realise that the youngest boys and girls who were at school in 1918 would now be nearing 30 years of age and the oldest would be men and women nearing 40 years of age. They would, in fact, form the majority of that section of the community now called upon to work the machinery of political democracy. It is intriguing to try and imagine what difference this extended education might have made in the formation of public opinion in regard to political developments at home and abroad.

Had the Fisher Act operated since 1918, would the literary taste and political judgment of the adult population have found satisfaction in the existing scale of values? Could the flippant daily picture press and the slobbering sex film have hoped to survive? Is it not possible that we might have had a public opinion in those fateful years 1933 to 1939 so much better informed and more critical of foreign policy than we were, and more determined in the defence of a democracy to which it would have owed so much? This is not just speculation. It seems quite a logical and realistic view. Such a generation would at least have understood the significance of European geography and would not have been dependent upon knowledge gained by following Hitler's aggressive hops from one country to another.

Is it too extravagant to suggest that a public opinion sufficiently advanced to insist upon part-time continuative education up to 18 years of age, would have also insisted that the age for leaving school be raised to

16, and would have planned not only for a longer education but a better one, providing, during the later years of school, the liberal education so essential to political democracy ?

A liberal education should demand that the content of education should be related to the real values of life. The main object should be that the purpose of education should be understood by those who participate in it. It is surely an anomaly that the brilliant boy who could pass an examination in most of the subjects in the school curriculum, would probably fare badly if he had to give an intelligent answer to the question of why he is at school. Or would he fail ? His answer would probably be sufficiently utilitarian to satisfy those who cling to the material conception of education as tenaciously as the Marxist clings to the material conception of history. Our educational system has taken its pattern from the society outside the school. It is a society in which the individual and the group struggle for place, position and power, a society of competition, a society in which class interests and class distinction dominate and even pervade the schools.

The head master who exhibited over the portals of the school the cryptic letters G.O. G.O.—get on or get out, was simply advocating a philosophy of education all too commonly accepted and one which is based upon the assumption that the purpose of education is to equip the child to accommodate himself to a static society. The wiser head master, Sanderson of Oundle, who claimed that the school should be "a miniature copy of the world as we would love to have it", had a closer appreciation of the fact that education has failed if it is not sufficiently dynamic to change the habits of society. We want opportunity for a liberal education in those later years of school life, because they are impressionable years, years in which the child can learn something of

the standard of values which make a completely civilised society. But that society must begin in the school. It must be a conscious effort to organise democracy as a way of life in the school.

The child should understand that the school is not just a competition ground for vocations and professions, and that his training for earning a living, necessary though that may be, is incidental to the wider training for living a full life, a life that may become more abundant as he, himself, wills that it shall be so.

The contribution of the school to democracy is to inspire the child with a love for education, a reverence for knowledge and an eagerness to pursue it. Given that, adult education will reap the harvest and political democracy will not be frustrated by mass inertia. The contribution which adult education has made to an enlightened public opinion is recognised. It has produced thousands of men and women capable of accepting responsibility for leadership and has both equipped and inspired them to take active part in all forms of public life. Yet it is true, as Sir Richard Livingstone has said, that adult education has failed to appeal to the masses. It can be popularised by stunts, and diluted into a form of mass entertainment, but that will make no contribution to the development of political democracy, "Just as the twig is bent, so the tree's inclined" and the stimulation of educational interest among the masses depends upon the impressions created by early training and experience. If we would produce a healthy plant, we must nourish the tender shoot. In education, as in the world of nature, we cannot grow figs from thistles.

Finally, those whose sphere of activity is in the stimulation of adult education, can take comfort from the fact that reforms in the national system of education have always been followed by progressive development of

adult education. To mention only four illustrations. The University Extension Movement, the first organised effort to provide adult education on a national basis, commenced in 1872 and followed on the Forster Act of 1870. The W.E.A. founded in 1903 by prominent officials of the Trades Union Congress, the Co-operative Movement and the Working Men's Club and Institute Union, followed the passing of the Balfour Act in 1902. The report of the Ministry of Reconstruction Committee on Adult Education, published in 1919, paved the way for a great advance in adult education and followed the Fisher Act of 1918. While the Act of 1944 actually places on local education authorities the responsibility for ensuring that adequate provision is made in their respective areas for the development of adult education and directs that in submitting their plans to the Minister they must consult with Universities and voluntary bodies engaged in the field of adult education.

It is obvious that the public discussion and voluntary activity which precede educational legislation are in themselves a medium for the education of public opinion, quite apart from the fact that the adult is stimulated to educational effort as the standard of general education rises and provides a greater contrast to his own lack of educational background. By abolishing the defects in our educational system, and working for a national system of education, providing equality of opportunity, we lay the foundation of an enlightened political democracy.

Chapter V

TOWARD A NEW SOCIETY

Though, as argued in the last chapter, education has been limited by the over-emphasis on its utilitarian purpose, it is capable of being used for many other purposes. It may be a soporific or a tonic. It may inspire constructive action or incite to revolution. It may add wisdom to understanding or be used to develop the art of living on one's wits. It can be used for good or abused for evil.

Plato defined its purpose over 400 B.C., and his definitions have been added to by thousands in every generation. No school prize distribution would be complete without the annual dissertation on the influence of education in building character. If it were possible to assemble and to publish all the definitions on the purpose of education we could fill an unending stream of volumes, and, what is more, we should probably agree that there was an element of truth in most of them—not excluding those dear to the heart of Samuel Smiles. Even the nineteenth-century critics who claimed that education would make the workers dissatisfied with their lot in life were nearer to the truth than they imagined.

No differences of opinion on the philosophy of education have so far prevented it being used to serve the economic needs of the period. Thus, in an industrial economy it has been the handmaiden of industry. Its success has been judged in terms of its contribution to industrial prosperity. It has never been agreed that the process might be reversed and that the main purpose of industry should be to minister to education.

Dr. R. H. Tawney, in *The Acquisitive Society*, made this suggestion when he said :

> . . . it is the social purpose of industry which gives it meaning and makes it worth while to carry it on at all. It is foolish, above all, to cripple education as it is crippled in England, for the sake of industry, for one of the uses of industry is to provide the wealth which may make possible better education.

Such sentiments were dismissed as utopian a generation ago. They are utopian today, only if we still think in terms of a static society, or even of the society of September 1939. Fortunately for the children of those who made such huge sacrifices to pave the way for a new civilisation, society can never be static again. The old gentlemen who were quite comfortable in the world of 1939 may contribute to Victory Bonds in the hope that they are purchasing a return to the *status quo*, but the words inscribed over the portals of the International Labour Office in Geneva are both a prophecy of change and a warning against resistance to change. "There can be no peace without Social Justice."

Thus, while many fought for social justice, others were planning for it. Whether the blue prints of the experts ever take material form, depends upon the acceptance of one fundamental principle—a principle laid down by President Roosevelt in his address to the International Labour Conference in November 1941 :

> There must be no place after the War in the world for special privileges for either individuals or nations.

If this principle were accepted and included in the terms of reference of those who are engaged in planning post-war reconstruction, it would mean a complete revolution in the society of today. It goes down to the roots of those defects in a system of political democracy which has stopped short of ensuring equality of economic opportunity. It holds both reproof and condemnation of an educational system which has failed to provide equality

of educational opportunity. In fact, one is the product of the other. It is a vicious circle in which economic privilege is used to purchase educational advantage and educational advantage to secure economic privilege. It is inevitable in a competitive society that the chief prizes should go to the educationally fit, but what is unfair is that the opportunity to become educationally fit should be so unequal. The rather academic contention whether equality of economic opportunity must precede equality of educational opportunity, or vice versa, is as unprofitable as the old argument, whether the hen or the egg came first. What is important, is that opposition to equality of educational opportunity comes from those who fear equality of economic opportunity. It is the twentiety-century version of "treading on the heels of the rich".

Dean Inge, who may have modified his views under the liberalising influence of the war, once held that we were providing the child of the ordinary working-man with educational opportunities so good that the working-class child would one day take the bread out of the mouth of the sons of those who belong to the class of which the gloomy Dean is a member. If it be assumed that little attention should be paid to the expression of a personal point of view from even so important a person as Dean Inge, then reference might be made to the more responsible pronouncement which came from the Committee on National Expenditure (1931). This Committee consisted of Sir George May, Prudential Insurance Company, Sir Thomas Royden, Cunard Steamship Company, Lord Plender, an accountant, P. Ashley Cooper and Sir Mark W. Jenkinson. Section 502 of their report said:

> Since the standard of education, elementary and secondary, that is being given to the child of poor parents is already, in very many cases, superior to that which the middle-class

> parent is providing for his own child, we feel that it is time to pause in this policy of expansion.

In the intervening period considerable public disapproval of these views may have brought a change of heart in the gentlemen who signed this report, and they may now ardently subscribe to Mr. Roosevelt's principle of a world in which there shall be no special privileges. What is all too obvious, is that behind the denial of equality of educational opportunity is the desire to conserve economic and social privilege. It is possible to say this without necessarily imputing any consciously designed plot "to keep the worker in his place". The fact is, educational privilege has become so interwoven in our social fabric that it has been accepted, except by a protesting minority, as inevitable and natural. It is part of the nineteenth-century legacy that children should be educated for the station in life to which they are born, and while no one would publicly state the case so crudely today, a Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education has argued when opposing removal of "beneficial employment" from the Act of 1936 that the universal raising of the school-leaving age beyond 14 would deprive industry of the nimble fingers of juvenile labour. We have no moral claim to adjust the rights of every new generation to our own needs.

It should not be assumed that these views are dictated out of sheer callousness. They are the views held by good-intentioned, often kindly people who have been accustomed to exercise authority and responsibility and who honestly believe that exceptional opportunity is the prerogative of those born to rule.

There is nothing new in this. Plato enunciated the same theory when advocating "Guardians of the State", selected from a superior class, who "would possess nothing of their own otherwise they would become wolves

instead of watch-dogs". But Plato's superior class was not a caste. It was to be superior in moral and intellectual values, and if exceptional opportunity were provided, exceptional service to the State was expected No one would quarrel with the suggestion that exceptional opportunity should be given to those who show exceptional capacity. The growing protest is against the fact that the exceptional opportunities are reserved. There is not only a dual system in the administration but also in the social conception of education. Enough has been said in previous chapters to show that we are overcoming those defects in the educational system, which we have inherited from the past—defects due to parsimony and to narrowness of mind and spirit. Even contentious dispute on sectarianism is giving way to a new spirit of toleration and compromise. We have travelled a long way in the past twenty years. But something more than the mere reform of educational machinery and provision is essential for a society in which the democratic way of life is possible.

Parliament has now provided all the machinery essential for securing expression of the popular will—Government of the people, for the people, by the people seems to be assured. But is it? Stage by stage there rises an educational edifice, capable of equipping those who are called upon to exercise political power to take an intelligent interest in citizenship responsibility. Public opinion has accepted and now stands firm for equality of educational opportunity. Why, therefore, is there need to doubt that the good life, the democratic way of life, is assured for all? Because however effective the common will may be expressed, its language must be understood by those who have to implement it. That is where difficulties arise. Those whose business it is to interpret the will of the common people do not always

understand it. Their habits of life and social outlook lead to different evaluations. They have been brought up in a different school. Side by side with the normal education system, we have an almost exclusive caste system. It is the centre from which real political and social power radiate.

It would be possible to enjoy equality of opportunity from the infant school to the university, and still to leave society almost unaffected by the change, while a public-school system is maintained which provides exceptional opportunity for the few. Reference has been made in a previous chapter to the fact that practically all the Presidents of the Board of Education, have come from public schools. This is not the place to discuss whether the public schools have provided the best presidents or whether the presidents have lived up to or belied the best traditions of the old school. The issue is much more fundamental. It is, that while political power is invested in the popular will, the effective use of that power rests with those who shape and administer policy, and they are an almost exclusive caste. The political leaders in modern governments are really dependent upon a bureaucracy of expert civil servants, the higher positions in which are almost entirely monopolised by the product of the public school. To appreciate the tremendous influence which the public schools have had on national and even international political and social policy, we only need to examine the personnel of the British embassies in every important world centre, and to scrutinise the credentials of those of our representatives who hold positions in the diplomatic services. We should find the same evidence of public-school influence in the Church, the judiciary and particularly in the military and naval services.

The claim made on behalf of the public schools is that they have developed in the individual the moral, mental

and physical values essential for responsibility and leadership. If evidence were required to substantiate this, we should probably be referred to the long lists of people occupying positions of eminence in the diplomatic, social and political services who came through the public schools, but while such appointments remain almost automatically the perquisite of a public-school education, the evidence would be suspect. Obviously, the public schools have a long tradition. Many of our greatest scholars, and most efficient public servants, have graduated through them, and have become famous either because of, or in spite of, a public-school education, but there is no virtue in claiming that we alone have scaled the walls of the beleaguered city if no one else is allowed to set foot on the ladder.

The plea for equality of educational opportunity is something more than a demand that the plums of office should be more equally shared. It is that, of course, in the sense that special privileges are incompatible in a democracy with equal rights, but it is something more. It is a claim to equality of access to power, to the control and direction of political, economic and social policy. It is not enough to be invited once every five years or less to express an opinion on these things. In a democracy it is equally necessary to ensure that opinions are not disregarded or misinterpreted.

So much is involved. There has never been a sufficiently clear appreciation of the real basis of social and political power. Take foreign affairs. Lord Vansittart, whose efficiency when permanent secretary at the Foreign Office no one questions, whether they agree with his views or not, says :

> Foreign affairs should be recognised for what they really are—the key business. They govern, unfortunately, all other trades. According as they are well or ill conceived,

> they decide, automatically, whether men shall live their lives, as artists or clerks or gardeners, as " tinker, sailor, soldier, sailor "—indeed whether they shall live at all. If a country is unhappy in the handling of its foreign relations the most perfect conduct of its internal affairs will be in vain.[1]

Who handles our foreign relations ? Ambassadors and members of the Diplomatic Service—the great majority of whom, born of well-to-do families, have been educated at the most expensive public schools—whose whole social life has been spent in an environment entirely divorced from the life of the common people. Yet it depends upon whether our foreign diplomacy is " well or ill conceived " how questions of peace or war are decided.

The position has been ably put by Mr. Harold Butler, the late Director of the International Labour Office, in his recent book, *The Lost Peace*, in which he says :

> As a rule the most interesting and characteristic products of a country are not its politicians. Those who imagine that they can know a people, its foibles and passions, strengths and weaknesses, by mingling only with its " ruling classes," make a profound mistake—the sort of mistake that Ribbentrop apparently made in London and that many better diplomats have made before him. In the old days when the masses did not count, a diplomat may have been able to discover all that he needed to know by mixing with the aristocracy with an occasional condescending nod to the wealthy bankers and merchants. I doubt even that, for when it comes to matters of peace and war it is the temper and fibre of the common people that has always counted in the end. . . . When the Habsburg empire had been reduced to a feeble but very democratic fragment, it was pathetic to find diplomats in Vienna clinging desperately to the decayed remnants of the Austrian aristocracy and only meeting the plebeian holders of political power in their offices or on formal occasions which could not decently be avoided. In Czechoslovakia it was smarter and more amusing to spend the week-end in the castle of

[1] *The Roots of the Trouble*,

a Schwarzenberg or a Hohenlohe, who were hankering in their hearts to restore the old feudal overlordship of the Germans over the Czechs, than to hobnob with the sober, middle-class statesmen who were building up the most democratic state in central Europe.[1]

One of the nine-day wonders within recent years was the discovery that temporarily to replace our chief diplomatic representative in the Far East, who had been attacked and injured by a bomb, we sent out a substitute who had actually commenced his education in an elementary school. No one could trace a precedent.

While it would be unjust to impute a general conscious class bias among the high civil service and the diplomatic corps, noted throughout the world for its integrity and freedom from graft and corruption, it is obvious that its viewpoint must be necessarily limited by a class outlook, even though it may not be conscious of it.

It is no mere accident that the public school has been the avenue to what might be called key-position appointments. It has been a definite policy to give preference to its products, not necessarily because they were better fitted by educational qualification, but because it ensured continuity of a distinctive caste control of social and political policy.

If the public school has exceptional values, they should be shared, without social distinction, by those best capable of profiting by them. There is no justification why the public school should be "feeders" for most of the key appointments in the civic, social, judicial, military and religious life of the nation, and, if there were, it would only make the claim to open admission for all classes the stronger.

It is only when educational privilege is seen in the

[1] *The Lost Peace*, Harold Butler. Faber and Faber, Ltd.

light of the social and political power it confers, that the claim for equality of educational opportunity is fully understood. The average citizen has never fully appreciated its importance. He has thought of it in terms of better opportunity for his children than he, himself, enjoyed, as a means to social security or as the means by which he and his children may enjoy their rightful cultural inheritance. It means access to all these things, but it means much more. Its full fruition should lead to making the personnel in the public services, and particularly in the key positions, accessible to, and broadly representative of, the common people. The significance of this, on social and political policy, should be obvious. It would mean at least that the aspirations of the common people would be understood and offer a much more certain guarantee that the will of the majority would be implemented. In short, it is essential to a democratic society.

It would be, however, a comfortable but quite fallacious theory to assume that a new heaven and a new earth depend entirely upon equality of educational opportunity. We could have equality of opportunity in an educational system which might be entirely undemocratic, or in which the provision was poor in both content and purpose. Equality of opportunity would avail little if the opportunities themselves were insufficient to meet the needs of a progressive society.

As we have seen in previous chapters, we have made much progress in the past twenty-five years. It is nothing like the progress which might have been possible had we had, in key positions at the Board of Education, a reasonable number of administrators who knew from practical participation in their childhood, all the disadvantages of overcrowded classes and all the discomforts of unsuitable school buildings. The question of the privileged position

afforded by a public school education has in recent months been a matter of concern to some Members of Parliament, and the new provisions made for assessing the suitability of candidates for the higher positions in the Civil Service by personality tests in the Civil Service College, as well as by the ordinary qualifying examinations, will go a good way toward providing entrants to Foreign Office appointments and to other services, drawn from more varied social origins than in the past. Speaking of the defects in the educational system—particularly the tragedy of the early school-leaving age for the majority of the children—Sir Richard Livingstone, in *The Future of Education*, already referred to, says :

> We take it calmly because we are used to it, and human beings see nothing wrong in abuses to which they are accustomed. But our descendants will view it as we view the slave trade or debtors prisons or child labour, which our ancestors accepted as natural and harmless institutions, and the sooner we anticipate the views of our descendants, the sooner we shall end a national disgrace.

Assuming that we are " anticipating the views of our descendants ", what is the content of the education which we think essential for a new society ? Perhaps at this stage, " content " is an inappropriate term, for it is the spirit and educational purpose which will shape the new society rather than the curricula.

Is it possible to relate education to a definite end, especially if that end be social in purpose, without meriting the criticism that it is being abused for some hidden form of propaganda ? If there is one place where propaganda should be treated as a crime and the propagandist as a criminal, it is in the school. We have condemned dictators who have first decided the kind of society they desired and then organised the educational system to fit

into it. But there is surely no condemnation in visualising and then consciously educating for a new society if it is a society with the good life. The dictator stands condemned because he stifles enquiry, eliminates freedom of speech and discussion and substitutes convenient ideologies for inconvenient truths. Education then ceases to have anything in common with the search for truth, because the truth is decided in advance.

If, as is generally accepted, the purpose of education is to create a more perfect civilisation, we cannot pretend that we are prostituting education by teaching children what civilisation demands of them. For instance, no one would count it propaganda to teach a child that it is wrong to exploit one's fellows, that our noblest achievements are not those actuated by the desire for personal gain, but those which can be counted as service to the community, or that the main purpose of work is to increase the good life for all. These simple moral values appear to be fundamental to any civilised society. They form the basic teaching of the scripture lessons in our schools, but as we have not so far been consciously engaged in creating a "new society" they have not been taken very seriously.

In the U.S.S.R., which has been engaged in building a new society, they have been accepted as normal moral principles, and anyone who has seen and talked with the young people there will appreciate the effect these principles have had in influencing their everyday behaviour. Actual personal experience enables us to quote one example. After acting as guide, interpreter and friend for more than a week to a mixed party of Britishers, a young Russian student was offered a small present by those members of the party who wished to show their gratitude and esteem. This she indignantly refused, and almost with tears in her eyes, exclaimed, "That would

spoil everything. I could never be your friend again—if one does only one's duty, to accept a present for that is to accept a bribe."

Whatever defects there may be in the system of education in the U.S.S.R. are mainly due to the rigidity of control of the doctrinaire, a defect predominant in our own nineteenth-century experience and not entirely unknown today. On the other hand, there is intense enthusiasm and idealism among both administrative and teaching professions, an entire absence of niggardly economies, no lack of opportunity and no mass apathy. There can be no comparison between the educational ideas of the U.S.S.R. and Nazi Germany. In the U.S.S.R. children are educated to live in a society of economic and social equality of opportunity. In Nazi Germany the child mind was deliberately perverted. False values were enthroned and the herd trained to spit upon the finer ideals of humanity. Intolerance was substituted for reason, and force and aggressiveness exalted as virtues.

It is so much easier to destroy personality than to develop it, and the real post-war problem facing the Democracies is how to re-educate the millions of fanatical young Germans in whom the critical faculty was smothered at birth and whose mind, body and soul is moulded to minister unquestioningly to the authoritarian dictates of a one-party state.

Democracy has one disadvantage in competition with totalitarianism. It needs time in which to build. It depends entirely upon a society, educated to think independently and trained to exercise critical judgment. Totalitarianism needs exactly the opposite environment. It would perish overnight if it produced citizens capable of independent thought or critical analysis. Education, therefore, has no function in a Nazi system. There is

need only for training. The question is whether we can meet the challenge of the positive propaganda aim in Nazi education unless we have a clearly defined aim in our own education.

If we accept the view that there is no future for civilisation unless it can accommodate itself to the democratic way of life, can we afford to be merely negative in educational aim and purpose? The totalitarian state abused education to destroy the spiritual and moral values which were aiding the development of a higher civilisation. Is it not of urgent importance that the democratic state—if it wishes to preserve civilisation—should be positive in its educational aims and purpose? While one-half of Europe has been trained for the jungle, can we afford complacently to mumble theories about "education for education's sake", or encourage educational theories which exaggerate the tendencies to escape either from the realities or the moral responsibilities of life?

The most important task of life is to preserve what is left of civilisation, and out of this to build something "nearer to our heart's desire". Education is of small value if it cannot help us in the most important of all tasks. That we can state its purpose in a thousand definitions does not alter the fact that it has a supreme purpose, and that all the other definitions depend on this. What is that purpose?

It is to educate the individual for the society in which he must live and to give him the power to change that society. It has a double purpose, with the emphasis on the second part of the definition. We should not over-emphasise the value of the first part. Indeed, if it were accepted as sufficient in itself, it would mean educating for a stabilised society. Yet it is necessary to educate the individual for the society in which he must

live, as the needs of the existing society are the dominan needs, preceding change.

Further, the individual must hand on to posterity the cultural heritage from the past and the spiritual and moral values of both past and present. It should be one of the functions of education to preserve for the new society all the values essential to it, and to prune or cut out those decayed values which, though sanctioned by tradition, would be harmful to a new society. Thus the school should be the inspiration to social change.

It is less important, at this stage, to set out in detail the kind of new society desired, than to consider what is wrong with the society in which we live, because unless we understand what is wrong we shall continue to educate for a false standard of values and make social change impossible.

This is no plea for making the school the cockpit of propaganda. On the contrary the claim that there should be an accepted standard of values in the content of education is a safeguard against propaganda. It has been pointed out already that education takes its pattern from the society in which it exists, and if this is so, and it cannot be denied, then it is obvious that it is moulded by external influences.

As the grip of Church sectarian influences has loosened, other interests have " coloured " the content of education with their own beliefs and dogmas. In one period a jingo imperialism—in another a narrow nationalism. Empire Day, which might have been used to illustrate the possibilities of international security through a wider acceptance of the idea of a commonwealth of nations, has, until very recent years, been used for boosting imperialism. The textbooks on history have been based not so much on facts as interpretations, and the school literature has been selected to provide for mental comfort

rather than mental stimulus. It is granted that in recent years there have been improvements, but there must be few among the youngest of the present electorate who knew anything about modern history, especially the industrial revolution, when they left the elementary school, except what they had themselves learned from nineteenth-century novelists.

If education is to influence the new society it must be freed from the grip of external interests. The new education should not take its pattern from society. It must pass on to society and shape it by its own standard of values. To do this the school must be the source from which the new values spring and in which they are practised.

If the new society is to be one in which there are to be no special privileges, it will be founded on co-operation and community effort. Competition as a private war, mild or vicious, according to the stake at issue, will be descredited. Competition will be the legitimate striving of the individual or the group to excel for the common good. In giving a false value to competition the school has "followed the crowd", except, curiously enough at the two extremes of the educational system—the nursery school and in adult education. Here, there is no competition, there are no certificates, diplomas or examinations, no rewards or punishments, but a group of equals practising the values it believes in. There is emulation, of course, in the nursery school, but it is all directed towards making life more colourful and comfortable, not for the individual child only but for the community of children.

The intermediate grades of our educational system, whether elementary, secondary or even university, have accepted the current view of a competitive society and prepare their victims to live in it. The teachers are

powerless, whatever their own ideals. They are limited by the prevailing conception that education is a training for a job or a profession, and from the entrance examination to matriculation they must cram their pupils to strive against each other to get to the top. They form their classes into groups of whites, reds, yellows and blues to compete with each other.

In any system of education, however perfect, some form of examination test will be essential. It would be necessary if only to decide the appropriate course of further education which the child should follow. The point is, that the content of education is almost dominated by competition. It may be that competition is good in so far as it stimulates and encourages individual effort, but where it is simply competition for the survival of the fittest it may make the school a miniature of the competitive jungle of the larger world outside.

All too often the atmosphere of those schools which loudly acclaim their "successes" is that of a battle-ground between youthful gladiators rather than a co-operative effort between the teachers and their pupils. Where the competition is between school groups or "sides", it is even more objectionable, especially where it is the practice for special attention to be drawn to those members of the "losing side" who are supposed to have let the side down.

After this, it sounds somewhat illogical to suggest that there is a form of competition which might be encouraged, and even more illogical to call it competition in co-operative effort. It means nothing more than providing a different motive for competition—the social incentive of service to the school as a community. If the school is to be a miniature of the society in which we would love to live, it cannot be like the world outside, a society of individuals each competing for personal gain and reward.

If the content of education is to influence the new society, we must start with the present generation in the school. Show our children by the way the school is organised that one of the supreme values in education is to learn how to live together as a civilised community.

It may sound extravagant, but when we count cleverness as of secondary importance to tolerance—conscientiousness, honesty and respect for truth and human rights—the content of education will make its contribution to the new soceity. While we accustom generation after generation to an education dominated by the competitive motive, they will accept, automatically, and as natural, a competitive society. Educational values must be restated in terms of a co-operative community, in which mutual aid, and not competition, is the law of life, for a new society in any other form would be a new name for an old system.

Even if we desired to retain current standards of values in education, we could not do so. Economic and social adjustments following the war will, of themselves, determine changes in society far reaching in character. The colossal destruction of real wealth—raw material, machinery and men, and the precautionary measures necessary to avoid widespread famine—will mean that without co-operation there could be neither national nor international reconstruction.

Current standards of values will not be good enough to enable us to cope with post-war problems effectively. Much less will they be sufficient for the real task of creating a new society in which international co-operation will be assured and war finally outlawed. In this matter the content in educational values will be of supreme importance. The war has added to our history. How is history to be presented to our children ?

It is always a temptation after a war for the historian to forget his responsibility for recording facts, in the more exciting task of embellishing them. There is so much material at his disposal. The exploits of the armed forces of the Crown, whether on land, sea or in the air, thrill us, and the qualities of heroism and self-sacrifice shown by the non-combatant civil community have added to the epic story. History should do full justice to the brave men and women who have offered their lives in the cause of human freedom and for democracy. But we must learn the lessons of history. We are paying a big price today for the fact that in every country the history book has been used to distort or misinterpret the real facts. History is an enormously important subject. When we desire to form judgment or take action we look for precedent to guide us. We look back. If the history records are inaccurate or distorted, our judgment may be warped and our actions may be seriously affected.

Is it possible, this time, for us to avoid the error, both in recording history and in teaching it, of confusing the heroism of the common man with the glorification of militarism? Is history to repeat itself, or can we seize this opportunity to place militarism in its right perspective? Mr. Bertrand Russell has expressed the real values which should be stressed. He says :

> I would not keep silent about wars and persecutions and cruelties, but I should not hold up military conquerors to admiration. The true conquerors in my teaching of history would be those who did something to dispel darkness within or without, Buddha and Socrates, Archimedes, Galileo and Newton and all the men who have helped to give us mastery over ourselves and over nature. And so I should build up the splendour of a lordly destiny for the human race to which we are false when we revert to wars and other

> atavistic follies and true only when we put into the world something that adds to our human dominion.[1]

The history book and the teaching of history in the school has been one of the most prolific sources from which false values have arisen. Nationalism—the inspiration of war—sprawls itself lustily over most of the pages of the history textbook. Its hold has been so strong that it has needed the greatest war in history itself to convince us of its danger ; yet a glance at the routine of one day in the life of the average man should have taught us that if nationalism were carried to its logical conclusion we should cease to produce and would die of starvation in a very short time. We now know that nationalism is a self-imposed blockade.

It is, however, one matter to discard ideas of national self-sufficiency and to disavow isolation and another to learn the art of co-operation—particularly international co-operation. It is the business of the politician to build the basis of the new society—but it is the province of the school to teach people how to live in it. If the adult is to learn the art of co-operating, his education in citizenship, national and international, must begin in the school. It is absurd to assume that children trained in their school life to accept values based on self-interest and competition are likely to understand their responsibilities or value the privileges of a society based on the common good when they reach the adult stage.

There are, of course, influences outside the school which affect the modern child. Some of these, such as the radio and the cinema, are of tremendous importance for good or ill in forming character and opinion. When it is argued that the school is not the appropriate place in which to lay the foundation of citizenship and that the child is too young to understand its import, it should

1 "*On Education*," Bertrand Russell.

not be overlooked that if the school does not supply a standard of values the radio and cinema will. It is not unfair to suggest that whatever values either the radio or cinema offer is a mixed bag. They make no pretence to one standard of values. They must cater for many, some good, some bad, and the modern child is vulnerable to both. In fact, his real danger is that he hears and sees things against which the children of a generation ago would have been shielded. On the other hand, he has advantages in the best which the radio and cinema provides, which were denied to the child of twenty-five years ago.

The school may not only establish its own educational values, but it is absolutely essential that it should do so, if only to act as a corrective to the commercialised and other interests outside. At the same time, its own standards, if maintained, will extend the influence far beyond the school. In the new society the school will carry its standard of values into its own children's theatres and cinemas, admirable agencies for the teaching of citizenship and democracy.

It is not unlikely that even those who agree that there must be a complete revolution in the attitude toward education, may evince some impatience with a policy which promises no immediate results. It has been maintained that there can be no real democracy—no new society, until we abolish class distinction in education, provide equality of educational opportunity and adapt the content and purpose of education to the new world rather than the old, but it need not be assumed that society is to be static between the old and the new. Indeed, it could not be so, or there would be no new society.

It may seem to be a long-term policy, but it need not be so. Hitler revolutionised the whole philosophy of education in twelve to eighteen months, and after five

years' experience no youth of 15 or over in Germany could have explained the meaning of tolerance or performed an open act of mercy. In five years the school generation became a collective mass, shouting the same slogans, thinking the same thoughts, despising the same decencies of life, a mob of young robots as obedient to manipulation as Punch and Judy, with little more intelligence and certainly without as much sense of humour. The fact that the totalitarian state, for its own nefarious purpose, can destroy the personality of the individual in so short a time, is a challenge to democracy to show its creative powers. Hitler destroyed, within the space of a few years, the work of centuries of civilising influences. The task of democracy is to make good, in no less time, for centuries of neglect. With all its defetcs, democracy can do the job, but we must build a strong foundation, and the foundation is in the school.

This, then, is the reply to those who desire quick results. The period of transition between the old and the new depends upon the speed with which we create the environment in which a new soceity could develop. To use a homely phrase, " it boils down " to stimulating a really serious public appreciation of the significance of education in relation to social change. Most people " appreciate " education. If all the eulogies and lip service in praise of education could have been translated into personal educational participation, we might have been much nearer to the new society. We are too prone to advocate education as a good thing for the other fellow. The appreciation which is essential, is that which enables us to see the fundamental place which education must play in all other aspects of social reconstruction and prompts us to missionary zeal on its behalf. Unless this kind of enthusiasm is shown by the workers themselves, who are obviously the one class who have

most to gain by the new conception of education, the new society will be long delayed.

It is true to say that educational interest is more developed in the official working-class movement than in any other section of the community, and educational reform has been the result of demands from that movement, but there is no general recognition that the whole ideals of the movement are dependent for their realisation upon educational opportunity and interest taken in those opportuntities. Some enlightened trade unions make allocations for the education of their membership. Others make no provision at all. The total amount allocated is infinitesimal in relation to the important part which education should play in developing moral responsibility and capacity for leadership.

Mr. H. A. L. Fisher mentions in his autobiography his keen disappointment that he was unable to arouse very much interest in the Labour Party for his 1918 Education Act. His criticism may be unjustified, especially as there was even less appreciation of the importance of education in 1918 than today, but the fact that educationalists are welcoming in the Act of 1944 some of the reforms which Fisher advocated in 1918 would suggest that it has taken us over a quarter of a century to assimilate inescapable facts.

Democracy is seen at its best in our self-governing working-class movements, but those who are actively associated with such movements know that the driving force, initiative and interest depends upon two or three members in every local group, usually those who have equipped themselves for the task by interest and active participation in education. The period of transition between the old and the new society will be measured by the increase or decrease of educational interest among the adult population. When we can say that we have

multiplied by twenty the number of students at present interested in social studies, we shall feel more confident that we have at least provided a force sufficiently strong to lay the foundation of the new society.

Chapter VI

PLANNING THE NEW SOCIETY

Our task has been, so far, to sketch the history and development of the educational system and to show its relationship to the society of the period—to present in miniature an objective picture of the system as it works today—to place on record, it is hoped, a not inadequate tribute to the health and welfare services in the schools —to show how political democracy suffered because of educational starvation in the nineteenth century and, in spite of subsequent development, still suffers from inequality of opportunity and the defects inherent in inequality—to show how class distinction in education preserves social and economic privilege for the few, thwarts the true expression of the popular will, leads to national and international misunderstanding and is a direct hindrance to the acquisition of those values in the content of education essential for developing a new society. Some of the necessary new values were discussed in the preceding chapter, but the realist recognises that ideals and aspirations and even detailed plans are only shadows without substance unless there is the will and determination to implement them. War-time is a period of penitence. A common danger unites Lazarus and Dives and even the crumbs are rationed with reasonable equality, while they vie with each other to produce blue prints for a new utopia after the war. How far has this spirit of toleration outlived the war? Are there no signs that Dives discarded his penitence soon after the final "all clear" sounded and showed an eagerness to return to the comparative security of 1939?

In the new society there is no room for the old Dives, and if he stages a return he will be swept unceremoniously

aside by a generation better educated than that of 1918 —a generation which fought for social security and will insist upon obtaining it. Not the least of the tributes which might be paid to the education of the past twenty-five years is that it has produced an adult generation which will not dumbly tolerate after the late war a repetition of the two and half million unemployed scandal which followed the last. A nation which, after a complete financial collapse, can raise for War and spend £14 million a day, will never again be able to call a halt to social legislation on the grounds of inability to pay for it. This is important, because unless we can accommodate ourselves to the idea that the astronomical expenditure employed in destroying the domination of Nazism will have to be matched, for some time at least, in building the new society, if only to ensure economic and social security, then setting up the Ministry of Reconstruction, trumpeting the virtues of the Atlantic Charter and encouraging official and unofficial planning is so much humbug. War must be paid for, but we have been slow to appreciate that if wars are to be avoided, peace demands just as much sacrifice in effort and money. There is an important difference of course, for expenditure on war, however inevitable, is entirely destructive and uncreative, while expenditure on peace is an investment the interest on which will be enjoyed by our children and generations yet unborn.

Thus the new society can only be planned on the assumption that as the war progressed it developed a wider sensitiveness to the need for change and a greater willingness to make sacrifices for it. If, therefore, we accept the view that education is essential to social change and that the full fruits of human endeavour and social harmony in any new society depends upon drastic reforms in the educational system, we must be prepared to face

an *expenditure* against which our present outlay would appear to be almost trumpery.

The total expenditure on education in 1937, including Scotland, was £107 million. The main item is, as might be expected, on teachers' salaries and pensions, which represented something like two-thirds of the cost. By comparison, no other item bulks large. Even buildings, assessed in terms of annual loan charges, represented no more than 5 per cent of the cost of elementary education, administration 4 per cent, and special services 7 per cent. Expenditure in relation to education is almost an unjustifiable term, investment would be far more appropriate. So much comes back, and to forget this is, as Tawney says in *The School-Leaving Age and Juvenile Unemployment*, as unintelligent as to pore over one side of a balance sheet while ignoring the other. It is, however, some encouragement to have progressed from a monitorial system which costs 5s. per year, to an elementary system which costs 5*s*. per *week*—but it has taken us over a hundred years to do that, and having regard to the capacity for producing wealth as compared with a hundred years ago, the progress is not so striking. Indeed, if viewed merely from the standpoint of maintaining our industrial efficiency and capacity to produce we cannot afford to be niggardly on education.

When we really come to the point of *planning a modern educational policy* for a new society it is remarkable how little is involved in the way of structure, but how much is involved in the direction of policy. The completion of reorganisation as proposed in the Hadow Report and the best of the recommendations in the Spens Report will, if fully implemented by the Act of 1944, go far to abolish those defects in the educational system referred to earlier, and secure more equality in opportunity.

The immediate task is to consider the problems which

should have priority and to venture into fields which the orthodox may consider somewhat controversial, particularly on the questions of dual control and public schools.

In order of priority, *buildings* must take first place, because bad as the position was before the war, it has been accentuated by the damage to and destruction of schools during the war. Had the schools which have been destroyed consisted entirely of those on the Board's black list, we should, providing there had been no casualties involved, have been under a debt of gratitude to the enemy airmen. Unfortunately, enemy bombers do not discriminate between good or bad schools, any school being an anathema to the Nazi unless it conforms to his own creed.

It would be no exaggeration to say that unless there is central and local planning *now* for the school buildings which will be required, the short-term programme of raising the school-leaving age and reducing the size of classes will be seriously delayed, or lack of accommodation will be used as an excuse for delay, while other reforms such as part-time continuative education up to 18, increased opportunity for secondary education and the internal adjustments necessary to relate education to a new society will remain mere dreams of an indefinite future. Indeed, the only remedy against an actual deterioration which would put the clock back for ten years is to make the question of school buildings as urgent as an emergency in war-time.

The country never had a better opportunity to complete the work which enemy bombers began, by laying waste every school which any adult citizen with reasonable standards of taste would consider unsuitable, if he himself, were compelled to sit in it for five days in each week for at least ten successive years.

Of course there is no virtue in planning unless behind the architect there is the builder and the material which turn the paper schemes into a reality. Unfortunately, claims for priority for labour and material ought not to have been delegated to the post war period and the Board were constantly reminded of this by deputations and the plans of various bodies such as the N.U.T. and the W.E.A. All concerned were aware of the magnitude of the task to be faced and no one could ignore the shortage of labour and material. The appeal, however, was to the Board and local education authorities to abandon the role of the humble supplicant which had earned for education the title of the Cinderella of the social services and to become audacious. Even if the material and labour was not available during the war, they should demand planned allocations to ensure supplies as soon as possible.

Any half-hearted acceptance of the position as unalterable would mean either that building of new schools and re-building and renovation of blitzed ones would be delayed indefinitely and patching up unsuitable buildings tolerated as inevitable.

It was not only a question of allocation of materials, but research into the kind of materials best suited for building schools which, while built with speed, ensure the amenities essential for modern life. We have to face the fact that temporary structures will have to serve in the centres where schools have been destroyed, and in this matter no plans should be approved which do not provide (*a*) a time limit for the use of such temporary premises based on the estimated period when permanent buildings could be provided ; (*b*) that the temporary premises conform to standards such as a local authority would consider necessary in a public hall, and if that were insisted upon the premises could be used for that purpose

when the permanent school had been erected. We must avoid the mistake which followed the war of 1914 when it was assumed that any old army hut could be used as a school. In all probability many of the army premises and war workers' hostels, etc., may be invaluable, with suitable adaptations and in a proper country environment, for school camps and, in some cases, for residential schools for both adolescent and adult education. In one or two cases they have already been acquired as emergency training centres for teachers.

As already indicated, the two most important administrative and policy changes—raising the *school-leaving age* and reducing the *size of classes* to at least a maximum of thirty children per class—are bound up insolubly with the adequate provision of school buildings, but even if the building programme were to be completed tomorrow there would remain the problem of providing the necessary *teaching staff*. It is still difficult to determine whether the successive waves of economy in the ten years between 1924 and 1934 were just the idiotic follies of amateurs or the deeper plots of more calculating reactionaries. In any case, the results have been equally unfortunate and have entirely confirmed the warning of those who argued that cutting down educational provision was not economy but suicide. Local education authorities which were progressive never knew what part of their programmes would be approved, and others which were not progressive had the best of all excuses for doing nothing. The economisers who discouraged training of teachers in one epoch are unfortunately the same people who, a few years later, "deeply regretted" their inability to reduce the size of classes because of shortage of teachers.

Here, again, the position is much worse than before the war. Thousands of men teachers were conscripted for army service, and in the main elementary schools,

which could least afford it, suffered most. This mistaken policy is consistent with the theory that the younger the child, the less important he is. In fact, men teachers appeared in the reserved occupation list of December 1941, at 35, while youth club leaders appeared at 30, and although the age was advanced to 35 the Board of Education thought it advisable, in a special circular to local education authorities, to say, "It is obviously important that Youth Service Organisers and Youth Committee Secretaries employed by Local Education Authorities should be deferred"; while in regard to teachers it was actually suggested that "if it would be possible to dispense with the services of any of the men whose deferment is applied for the Board should be so informed". Is it any wonder that the paternal care which is being lavished on the "Service of Youth" and the generous subsidies with which it has been endowed have aroused a curiosity which does not arise from envy? No one would underrate the importance of adequate recreational, social and educational opportunities for youth—so long as it is not a permanent "repair service" for the casualties of educational neglect in earlier years. If it is merely to be that, then we had better spend the effort and the money at the age when it is a preventive rather than a doubtful cure.

The teacher problem is a matter that is too important to be treated on a short term policy.

Apart from the scheme for emergency training which is designed to serve a temporary need, there is the long term policy for full training courses. The Board of Education decides, in effect, what number shall be trained each year. Planning in this matter would not be so difficult, if it were merely a question of numbers. It is now also a question of relating the training to the needs of a post-war society, and for that the obvious need is for a longer and

more generous training. The two-year college system provides the schools with a steady stream of teachers whose practical efficiency is in general of a high standard. What is doubtful is whether an education which as early as the age of 20 sends them into an occupation which requires experience of life, as well as of books, is adequate for the needs of a changing society. It must be recognised that, once in school, most of them may spend the rest of their lives there. They are not working with inanimate matter but with live, pulsating human material, and it is of the utmost importance that the teacher should keep his mind flexible and his interests fresh.

If he is to keep pace with the evolution of thought, the movement of ideas and the progressive development of knowledge, he should have—as in Scotland—a university degree. There is nothing sacrosanct about the degree in itself, but the training would be an invaluable discipline, would provide a wider range of knowledge, give him an opportunity of moving during his college course among others who are entering professions other than teaching and broaden his experience. That there is need for a higher standard of opportunity for training is shown by the fact that of the elementary school teachers in England and Wales in 1938, as many as 29,000, or 17 per cent, were supplementary or uncertificated, while only 7.3 per cent were graduates, a proportion which contrasts unfavourably with Scotland, where a university degree is compulsory for men, and where 48 per cent. of all the non-technical teachers are graduates. The number of uncertificated teachers in 1938 was only eleven.

Planning for the teaching profession involves both an increase in the number of trainees and prolonged and better opportunities for training. The urgency of the matter may be adduced from the fact that the war has

reduced by nearly two-fifths the number entering training colleges. Raising the school-leaving age will mean more children in the schools and will more or less balance the expected decline in the child population. On the other hand, the reduction of numbers in overcrowded classes would, itself, demand considerable increases in teaching staffs. The teaching profession has made a self-sacrificing contribution to the emergency need for intensive short term emergency training courses. We must see that these courses do not become a permanent substitute for the more adequate opportunities which are essential for a really effective teaching service and this, again, is a problem of planning now for the years ahead.

It is when we come to the point of legislation that controversial issues arise, and special interests begin to exert influence. Mr. Fisher had to face opposition to the 1918 Education Act, but in his autobiography he affirms that had he not succeeded in piloting his Bill through the House of Commons in the last year of the war it would not have secured approval *after* the war when a period of reaction followed the war-time penitence of a chastened and sobered people. There is a warning and a lesson in this. On this occasion we have profited by the warning and the Act of 1944 was the first of a series of legislative reforms planned during the war. A Parliamentary Act in hand is worth two in the bush though its ultimate effect depends upon the voluntary acceptance of its financial implications.

The Education Act, 1936, was, as stated, a compromise measure. Official policy, as represented by the late President of the Board of Education, now Lord Soulbury, declared in favour of the withdrawal of the " exemption " clause for beneficial employment. Educationists accepted the postponement of a general raising of the age to 15 as inevitable, but there was no reason whatever why

the Board of Education should not have encouraged local education authorities to use the powers they already possessed to raise the age wherever accommodation and other conditions made it possible.

But it is equally essential that there should be a time period to the limitation of compulsory education to 15. Strong pressure was exerted to ensure that the 1944 Act should bind L.E.A.s to *raise the age to 16* by a specified date. Five years from the signing of the peace treaty has been suggested. This appears to be a far too liberal "armistice", especially when it is remembered that even with the war over by 1945, only the very youngest of the children now at school could hope to benefit by the extension. If five years were accepted it ought to be conditioned by the provision that the Board should encourage L.E.A.s to operate it before the maximum period of five years, if possible. The case for a school-leaving age of not less than 16 is so familiar and unanswerable, that it should not be necessary to argue it here. That is not to say that it is universally accepted, and if there is no open opposition there is a rather subtle whispering campaign in favour of all remaining under educational supervision up to 18 years of age, but that some, at 13 or 14 or 15 at latest, will be directed into industry, which will become, for this purpose, a kind of wing or colony of the education service giving an apprenticeship training of a modern kind.

There can be no disagreement on the question of *continuative part-time education* up to 18—but not as a substitute for a reorganised four years' liberal education up to 16. The issue is, how can education, which may have been, in the past, somewhat too formal and academic, recover an organic connection with life? The line of recent progress has been to modify the school curriculum to adopt increasingly practical methods of teaching and

to give social context to many of the normal school subjects. There is no doubt much room for experiment in all these ways. The schools must be provided with whatever equipment they need to stimulate the imagination and encourage the self-expression of the growing lad or girl. But it is in the community of the school that they can best develop all sides of their personality ; and the need for a more imaginative, more flexible, in some ways more practical, school curriculum must not lead to confusion as to the place of the school in the life of the young people. No child must come into the labour market—this should surely be accepted after all these years of educational debate—before the age of 16 ; nor should his education cease, before that age, to be a general education, planned as a whole for the development of his personality. On this minimum demand there should be no compromise.

Moreover, we shall need the extra years devoted to education. Our juvenile population is declining[1] ; we must make the most of it. It will have to face the difficult problems created by a generation which had fewer opportunities than its own and will have to maintain civilisation at a higher level. It will have to adapt itself to rapid changes in the technical process of industrial life and new values in social life. It may have more leisure : it ought, in any case, to be better equipped than it has been in the past to use the leisure it has. From a national and social standpoint, therefore, the case for a longer school life seems irresistible.

The provision of part-time education up to 18 was suggested in what have been termed *day continuation schools*. The term is over twenty years out of date. It is not inspiring and implies simply starting where one left off. Fortunately wiser counsels prevailed and the term

[1] See Hogben, *Political Arithmetic*.

County College was substituted. It should be so planned as to provide for a choice of subjects—practical, bookish or artistic. But its main purpose will be to awaken interest in the coming responsibilities as a citizen. The college, like all other branches of education, should give a training in all the values essential to a new society. For this special branch of education we need teachers who are active-minded, imaginative, and socially conscious.

What might be called the extremes of our educational services, the nursery school and the junior college, ought to provide the prologue and the epilogue to citizenship.

While plans are maturing for lengthening the school life from 5 to 16, for part-time to 18, for making much more extensive provision for the 2's to 5's and for a considered programme for providing sufficient fully trained teachers and drastically overhauling the school accommodation—indoor and outdoor—we must settle some of the problems on which there are differences of opinion and on which reorganisation depends. We must decide at what point there should be a break in continuity in a particular educational environment. There is general agreement that 7 years of age is appropriate for transition from the infant to the junior school. The Hadow Report suggested 11 as the break with primary education and the Spens Report supported this. There is a strong body of opinion in favour of 13. There are not likely to be any heads broken in this dispute, for there is general agreement that in any case the secondary school must provide a period of three to four years which shall be varied in character and provide for all types. There is considerable room for changes in the curriculum and for a thorough reconsideration of the *place of examinations* in secondary education. In Scotland, as a war measure, the teachers were allowed to set the leaving certificate questions, and experience gained from this experiment

may guide us in modifying our policy in regard to the present methods.

And now we come to the problem which has been one of the major hindrances to educational reform. No discussion of post-war policy which ignored the problem of *dual control* would be either honest or realistic. It has been claimed already that almost every effort for educational reform since the beginning of the nineteenth century to the Education Act of 1936 has either suffered early bereavement or survived in an emaciated form as a result of differences of opinion on religious teaching and control. The 1936 Act was a compromise which, by its promise of grants for the building of new voluntary senior schools for a limited period, attempted to accomplish the raising of the standard of senior schools without alienating the Churches. The Church of England was able to build a few—a very few—new schools ; the Roman Catholic Church was more ambitious ; and at Liverpool the refusal of the city council to make grants to new Catholic schools led to a major dispute, in the course of which the Board of Education used its powers of stopping the L.E.A. grant in order to enforce the Act and the agreement with the Churches on which it had been founded.

Before the Education Act of 1944 reached anything like draft form, there were long discussions with the religious and secular interests concerned. Even then, Mr. R. A. Butler, the then President of the Board, would not commit himself or the Government beyond the issue of a White Paper on "Educational Reconstruction" published in the summer of 1943.

There were two distinct issues. First, was the teaching of religion to be made compulsory and was it to be based on denominational doctrines ? Or was it to be left to the teachers, and to be based on an "agreed syllabus" as was

usual in many schools provided by the local authorities?

Secondly, since the reconditioning and rebuilding of the voluntary schools was, generally speaking, beyond the financial capacity of the Churches, should the task be undertaken by the State, and, if so, on what terms? In principle, they were the two problems which had provided the basis for such heated controversy since the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The controversy was no less keen in the public demonstrations, private discussions, deputations to the President, and in the debates in Parliament preceding the Act of 1944, but the opportunities for compromise were more favourable than ever before. First, a coalition government was in office, which in itself removed the single party sting from any legislation during that period. Second, the country was passing through the most critical period of the war and it was counted almost disloyal to disturb the prevailing spirit of national unity, Third, Mr. Butler knew he would have to compromise or lose his Bill, and the more intelligent section in the Churches knew that if this Bill was lost through their intrangencies public opinion would be so shocked that it would demand that the schools should be completely separated from the Church.

Whether this desire to be mutually accommodating resulted in Mr. Butler conceding too much to the Churches is again a matter on which there is great controversy.

Fortunately, although the question of denominational teaching is always a political question it is never purely party political. On religious teaching the most ardent socialist can be and often is, the boon companion of the most diehard tory. The Church is one foundation and where its interests are affected politicians who are keen Anglicans or Roman Catholics cease to be politicians and become Churchmen. The most violent storm the Trades

Union Congress has had to face was the declaration at its 1944 Conference in favour of abolishing dual control, while the Labour Party has always considered discretion the better part of valour and has not made any public pronouncement on the subject.

I only mention these points to emphasise that Mr. Butler did not agree to the continuation of dual control because he is a tory and a Churchman. He was, in addition, one of the few enlightened Presidents who has ever been at the Board of Education.

I happen to know from fairly close contact with the Board during the period Mr. Butler was in office, that he was less concerned with the particular brand of religion to be taught in the schools, than he was that the school buildings should be fit places for the children attending, and it will be noted that whatever concessions he made to the Churches were contingent upon them providing school buildings with amenities no less favourable than those provided by the County authorities.

The compromise is very complicated, and runs like a thread through the whole of the Act, six sections being devoted to religious education alone. Some reference has been made to the conditions of the compromise in Chapter III, but to make quite clear what the arrangements are in regard to the three types of voluntary school it should be reiterated that *Controlled schools* are those which pass to the Education Authority if the Managers find themselves unable or unwilling to meet half the cost of alterations and improvements needed to bring the buildings up to standard. Though the power of appointing and dismissing teachers passes to the authority it is subject to the right of the Foundation Managers to be consulted as to the appointment of head teacher and as to the appointment of reserved teachers for religious education, within certain limits. For instance, such teachers will give

denominational teaching for not more than two periods a week to those children whose parents desire it.

Aided schools are those in which the Managers are able and willing to meet half the cost of alterations, improvements and external repairs, the other half being met by the Exchequer. The powers in regard to the control of the school and denominational instruction remain substantially as before.

Local agreement schools. These, where they exist, are schools which have been built under the 1936 Act. To assist the Churches to reorganise under the proposals of the Hadow Scheme, local authorities were empowered but not compelled, for a limited period to pay not less than 50 per cent, nor more than 75 per cent of the cost of new *non-provided* schools for senior children. Owing to the inability of many Managers to raise their share of the cost, to the dislike of some to the increased control given to local education authorities and to the unwillingness of a few authorities to subsidise denominational schools, only 519 proposals were put forward under the 1936 Act (239 of which were Roman Catholic Schools). Of these only 37 had materialised up to 1943.[1]

Under the Act of 1944, provision is made that *where application had already been submitted* for a special agreement school, the local education authority shall honour the agreement and pay the grant toward the cost. If all the 519 schools mature they are estimated to accommodate some 136,000 senior children.

The authority has the right of appointment and dismissal of teachers, subject to the right of the Managers to be satisfied as to the competence of certain of the teachers (called reserve teachers) to give denominational teaching.

Whether the Churches can face the financial obliga-

[1] White Paper on Educational Reconstruction (H.M.S.O.).

tions demanded by the recognised standard of school buildings and school amenities to be imposed, even with the liberal assistance now guaranteed by the Exchequer and, in certain cases, by local authorities, is a matter which only time can decide. When it is remembered that 92 per cent of the non-provided schools were built before 1902 it is fairly obvious that heavy capital expenditure will be required to bring them up to modern standards, and it is doubtful if the most ingenious architect could suggest anything but dynamite for many of them. It may be that the magnitude of the problem may lead to more of these schools becoming "controlled schools" under the Act. To anyone able to look beyond the limits of a particular religious formula, it must seem that to impart a knowledge of the Scriptures in the atmosphere of a well constructed, healthy and adventurous modern school would have in it more of the spirit of Christianity than the dogged insistence on the right to teach catechism in a barn.

On the other hand, the compromise on the religious issue has left the Churches in a much stronger position than before. For the first time in the history of the country religious observance becomes compulsory in all types of schools and all but a very small minority would agree that, leaving aside the denominational issue, it is all to the good that the nation's children should learn to reverence the spiritual and moral values in the Christian faith. My experiences as Chairman of a Juvenile Court would have taught me that, if nothing else had done so.

And now to return to our planning of the new society. A year after the third edition of this book was published in 1943, the Butler Bill became an Act of Parliament. In some respects our original planning anticipated the provisions made in the Act. For instance, it seemed incredible to believe that a nation fighting for democracy

of a positive and genuine character, could continue to tolerate a secondary school system based on the social status of the parent, and the plea that the *abolition of secondary school fees* should be given priority is embodied in the Act of 1944, with the unfortunate exceptions that the Direct grant aided schools already referred to, may continue to accept pupils whose parents are able and willing to pay the fees, while, of course, the " Public " schools and the preparatory and " independant " schools which feed them, retain their *status quo*.

At the time the Bill was under discussion in the House, a special committee—the Fleming Committee—appointed in 1942, was considering how the " Public " and independent schools might be " more closely associated with the national system of education ". An interim report was submitted to assist Mr. Butler in deciding on a line of policy in drafting the Education Bill. In this report the majority recommendation was for the abolition of fees in *all* schools aided in any way out of public funds, but Mr. Butler rejected the recommendation. Later when the Committee issued its final report, it was unanimous, but, like most unanimous reports, it was a compromise as might be expected, with the " Public " schools well represented on the Committee.

The compromise proposed two schemes, and as neither are likely to be very effective, they need not be considered in detail. The main effect was to continue the recognition of direct grant-aided schools, subject to the admittance of 25 per cent, and if claimed up to 50 per cent of pupils from primary schools. Secondly, the provision of Bursaries in boarding schools as a condition of recognition by the Minister, and, thirdly, the provision by L.E.A.s of more boarding schools and hostel accommodation by L.E.A.s.

The report had a frigid reception by most local

authorities, and there have been cases since in which certain authorities have refused offers of accommodation from boarding schools on the ground that they objected to creaming their own schools of the best pupils, to send them into an environment in which they would occupy the unpleasant role of the poor relation. Many of the authorities have long term plans for boarding schools of their own.

But there were other spheres of *private* education which demanded scrutiny. It is one of the anomalies of the liberal freedom enjoyed in Great Britain that anyone incapable of managing an ordinary business could always open up a private school. So long as the school uniform was sufficiently decorative it did not matter very much about the competence of the teaching staff or the amenities of the buildings. Thus our counties or county towns have been strewn with hundreds of these small havens of suburban snobbery.

A number of them are of course very efficiently staffed and managed, but it has been difficult to estimate how many would pass a reasonable standard test because, up to the passing of the act of 1944, there was no compulsory inspection. The "Chuter Ede" Committee recommended this in 1932 and, in future, all private schools—and they numbered nearly 10,000 in 1932—are to be licensed, and to secure approval must conform to certain recognised standards of teaching and equipment. That should at least root up the weeds.

The *school welfare services* have been described and eulogised in Chapter III, though, as pointed out, the benefits were unevenly distributed. The claim that in planning for a new society, more responsibility should be taken by the Exchequer to relieve the poorer authorities has, in large measure, been met in the Act of 1944. Provision must be made for children "suffering from dis-

ability of mind or body " and, where necessary, *special schools* must be provided. The responsibility for ascertaining what children need special educational facilities is placed on the local authority. The authority has the duty of arranging for *medical inspection* at appropriate intervals and providing *free medical treatment* where necessary.

From September 1st, 1946, it became a statutory duty of the authorities to provide two-thirds of a pint of *free milk* for all children attending school, and, under the Act, they must plan *canteens* in connection with all schools under their control for the provision of a *free midday meal.*

The powers of the authorities are extended in regard to *provision of clothing and boots*, where a child is unable by this inadequacy " to take full advantage of the education provided ".

A parent's means test is to be applied to children taking up residence in a boarding school or county college and to encourage authorities to build schools where necessary or to provide *suitable transport* no child under 8 is obliged to attend any school more than 2 miles from home and if over 8, more than 3 miles.

Strong pressure was exerted to secure that *employment of school children* outside school hours should be made illegal. The powers which regulate this, under the Children and Young Persons Act, 1933, is exercised by the Home Office. Section 56 of the Act of 1944 confirms this arrangement. On the other hand, the act of 1933 actually and expressly prohibits any child from working before school hours but this is visciated by a subsequent sub-section to provide that local authorities may make bye-laws permitting one hour of employment before school, thus, as the Under Secretary for the Home Office said in the House, " it is only by taking positive action that local authorities can sanction one hour's employment ". He also stated that " out of 316 authorities, 217 had made

bye-laws permitting one hour's employment before school ".

It is common knowledge that the newspaper boy and very often girl, could not possibly do the " round " in one hour, and that, in fact, children often leave home as early as 6 a.m. and go straight on from this part-time job to school at 9 a.m. It is a scandalous abuse of child labour. The minimum age for part-time employment was 12. Due to the raising of the school-leaving age to 15, part-time employment will be prohibited under 13, and when the school-leaving age becomes 16, the restriction on employment will apply to those under 14.

The bold course would have been to transfer all powers in respect of the legislative supervision of children, including remand homes and approved schools, from the Home Office to the Ministry of Education, and to remove all powers for making bye-laws in regard to employment of school children outside school hours, from the local authorities, even including potato gathering, and harvesting, except where it is undertaken voluntarily in school holidays.

Up to now, we have been dealing almost entirely with the needs of the child, and it would seem that on the whole the Act of 1944 does provide a vista of the new society. It is, however, a distant vista and the journey may be long. How long, depends upon the imagination, foresight and self-sacrifice of those of us who left school many years ago and who are determined that the children of today shall not suffer the disabilities which so embittered our own experience. If, then, we are to shorten the journey and make " the crooked straight and the rough places plain " for our children, we must equip ourselves for the task.

The emphasis placed on the education of the future citizen has not been intended to obscure the imperative

need for educating the citizen of today. Indeed, the two needs are indivisible. That is why *adult education* will be a question of priority for some years to come and must be discussed in detail later. Adult education is a priority question, because it is among other things, an instrument for making good the intellectual starvation of past years and for correcting the mistakes of early education.

More especially it is a priority question, because the late war has raised more problems than it solved and unless we can settle these problems the promised land to which our children look so hopefully may turn out to be nothing but a barren wilderness.

Chapter VII

THE EDUCATION ACT, 1944—THE FOUNDATION FOR A NEW SOCIETY?

Comment on the Education Act, 1944, has so far been general, deliberately so because the Act itself is so complicated and is clothed in such legal formality that the reader would have been bored and confused by descriptive detail. The administrator will read and interpret the Act, but the ordinary man to whom this book is dedicated is only concerned with general principles. His main concern is to discover how far the Act really abolishes the defects and disabilities described in the earlier chapter of the book. He wants to know whether it will lay the foundation for a new Society. Will it make the dry bones of democracy live and clothe it in something more attractive than the threadbare garb of nineteenth century slogans?

Will it strengthen democracy at its base, making government of the people, by the people, for the people a reality? Will it provide genuine equality of opportunity at every stage of educational development? These are only a few of the questions which come to one's mind as an effective test of what has been described as "the greatest landmark of our educational history?" Nor need we hesitate to give full credit to Mr. R. A. Butler for an Act which does in many respects provide a definite break with the past.

How far it will fulfil the high expectations aroused by the discussions which preceded it in the House of Commons or the Government White Paper on educational reconstruction which was intended to be the blue print on which it was modelled, will depend upon the imagination of those who administer it, the enthusiasm

of the teachers who have to work it and the willingness of the taxpayers to pay for it. As the Ministry stated in its educational pamphlet No. 1, *The Nation's Schools*, " When completed—indeed when it is carried into effect, there will still remain the major task—primarily the task of teachers, though administrators have their part to play—of ensuring that the schools so provided shall fulfil the high purpose indicated in the White Paper on educational reconstruction, to secure for children a happier childhood and a better start in life."

If the Act embodied all the " high purposes " of the White Paper, the answers to the questions raised by the ordinary man could have been positive and reassuring. Unfortunately, between the issue of the White Paper in July, 1943, and the publication of the Act in 1944, there were second thoughts. These discouraged the adventurous spirit of 1943 and introduced into the Act an undue caution, disappointing to those who had hoped that the break with tradition was to be complete.

A perusal of the White Paper raised hopes that for the first time we were evolving a philosphy in education which would relate our educational system to a society which had changed radically since 1939. It is difficult to embody a philosophy in an Act of Parliament, but if the aim of the Act be to achieve by administrative means some purpose not expressly stated in the Act itself, then those who are to administer it must place emphasis on the spirit of the law rather than the letter of the law. That is why the White Paper is so important. The Act is the guidepost, the White Paper the goal. It is prefaced by an affirmation which ought to be printed at the head of the agenda paper of every member of a local education authority at every meeting :

> " Upon the education of the people of this country, the fate of this country depends."

That is a truism which should be carved over the portals of the Ministry of Education and embossed upon its notepaper. The words have a familiar ring to those who have been urging educational reform for the past forty years, but they cease to be a platform slogan and become a guiding principle when accepted as the text on which Government policy is based.

Of course, we must not overlook the setting in which the words were used. When the White Paper was published in 1943, we were passing through the most serious crisis the nation has ever had to face in its long history. We were in a penitent mood : " When the Devil is sick, the Devil a Saint would be ". In such mood our frank confessions are often the prelude to embarrassment, when at a later date, with consciences less distraught we find our feet on firmer ground. And yet the greatest folly we could commit would be to imagine that the crisis of 1943 marked the end of an epoch. It merely introduced a new phase to an ever deepening crisis, and unless we recognise as a permanent principle that " upon the education of the people of this country, the fate of this country depends ", the history of 1943 will be repeated. We have argued to the point of almost wearysome repetition, that the character of the people we produce will depend upon the positive character of the education we provide. The White Paper unreservedly accepted this theory. Its whole argument is that the educational system must be related to the needs of a democratic society and, indeed, must help to create that society. It should " secure for children a happier childhood and a better start in life ". That is the foundation. There is no suggestion that " the better start in life " is a mere utilitarian device to be used for personal advantage. On the contrary, it is " to provide means for all, of developing the various talents with which they are endowed

and so *enriching the in heritance of the country whose citizens they are.*" Even the diversity in educational provision " must not impair the social unity within the educational system ", but must be used so as to " open the way to a more closely knit society and give us strength to face the tasks ahead."

Thus, instead of education being the instrument for deepening the fissures dividing one social class from another, as in the past, it is to be the rock on which to build social unity and to secure a more closely knit society.

The harmony which should regulate human relationships has always been marred by individual ambition, greed and selfishness. As long as we view education as something we bestow upon the individual for his own advancement and profit, instead of something which he holds in trust and exercises for the wider benefit of the community so long shall we encourage the individual to isolate himself from his social responsibilities. The conception that education can be a unifying force, ensuring " social unity ", and securing " a more closely knit society " would introduce a harmony in human relationships which would silently revolutionise our whole social and economic life, a revolution not confined to the sphere of local relationships but extending its influence to national and even international life, for as the White Paper wisely says, " *Education in the future must be a process of gradually widening horizons, from the family to the local community, from the community to the Nation, and from the Nation to the world.*" It is " with these ends in view that the Government propose to recast the national education service."

" *With these ends in view.*" Is there no justification for the criticism that between the issue of the White Paper and the birth of the Act there were hesitations, doubts

and second thoughts? The criticism is that in "recasting the education service" the "ends in view" have been obscured. The first condition of social unity is the complete removal of every social barrier to unity. Thus, the White Paper courageously condemned the system under which "a parent by paying only one-third of the cost of education can *buy* a place in a secondary school for his child, possibly to the exclusion of an abler child whose parent is not in that position". It emphasised this anomaly in language which has become the text almost of every educational reformer during the past 40 years when it said:

> "A system under which fees are charged in one type of post-primary school and prohibited in the other, offends against the canon that the nature of the child's education should be determined by his capacity and promise and not by the financial circumstances of his parent."

The crucial test of our enthusiasm for social unity and a more closely knit society is the extent to which it is enforced by equality of opportunity.

The White Paper promised it. The Act only goes part of the way toward the goal. While any kind of publicly grant-aided school remains which provides a two-way admission, one by scholarship from local education authorities, and the other by private contract with fee-paying parents, we stabilise the system under which "a parent can *buy* a place in a secondary school for his child, possibly to the exclusion of an abler child whose parent is not in that position".

The criticism would remain unchallengeable even if there were a common entrance examination for both scholarship and fee-paying pupils, as the school governors —not the L.E.A.—will determine who are the fee-paying pupils to be admitted and assuming that the school governors were entirely unbiassed, there is no guarantee

that the fee-paying pupils they admit would be of better intellectual capacity than the pupils rejected for scholarships on the ground of lack of accommodation. It is true that in the schools provided and maintained by local education authorities, secondary education is to be free, and it may be argued that the *direct grant-aided* schools being only just over 200 in number, form such a small proportion of the whole, that one might easily ignore the differentiation they create. That is only to beg the issue, which is one of principle. In point of fact, in a society aiming at social unity, the smaller the minority claiming special privilege, the more glaring is the anomaly. An even more important issue is that, if social unity is to be achieved by the new education service, that unity must be evident in the school itself. The inherent implication of the White Paper is that the school should be free of class distinction, otherwise the ideal of social unity has no meaning.

Some of the schools which formerly were direct grant-aided have decided to become "independent", rather than accept the quota of pupils from primary schools for which L.E.A.s would have provided scholarships, and while in the direct grant schools which have been recognised by the Ministry, there is little doubt that the school governors and teaching staffs will make no discrimination between fee-paying pupils and pupils from primary schools, the fee-paying pupils will view themselves as first class passengers, and the primary school products as third class, and a social barrier which would have automatically disappeared in a school free of all privilege will remain. The snobbishness which all too often actuates the parent who "prefers to pay for the education of his own child" cannot fail to be inherited in some degree by the child himself. This is accentuated in those direct grant schools which accept both day and

boarding school pupils, as the day-timers consist mainly of primary school products and the boarders of fee-paying pupils. There may be a place for the direct grant-aided school but it can only justify public aid and, indeed, can only provide the kind of education ensuring "social unity" in a "closely knit society" by discarding all differences based upon "the financial circumstances of the parent". This means that it should come within the state system. The idea that it would lose its status and opportunity for experiment is not very convincing when one remembers that in the best modern secondary schools controlled by local authorities, the encouragement now given for freedom of expression and experimentation is out of all comparison with some of the more respectable and cautious, direct grant-aided schools.

The even more respectable "Public" schools seem to be torn between a desire to make a gesture to democracy by admitting a thin stream of pupils aided by public funds, so long as the trickle is not strong enough to unbalance the traditional class structure of the schools, and a desire to become even more exclusive by putting up their fees and discouraging any approach from plebeian sources. Their future is unpredictable, but one thing is certain. Public opinion will no longer stand for a social system under which a public school education carries any title to special consideration for professional and public employment as it has done in the past. As the general level of education improves and as public authorities make provision for higher education, and particularly for full-time education of the boarding school type, as they have power to do under the Act, the public schools may be faced with the choice of opening their doors wide enough to make them acceptable to a modern democratic society, or of perishing from their own isolation.

The real question is, whether local education authorities

will rise to their responsibilities under the Act or whether on grounds of so called " economy " some of them may prefer to take the line of least resistance and by doing a deal with some of the public schools confirm and establish them in their monopoly. This would be unfortunate for no mere trickle of publicly aided pupils will make the public school anything but an anachronism in a democratic society.

All this may be said with a full recognition of the contribution which the public schools have made to the cultural life of the Nation, a contribution, however, which has been more limited than it might have been had those who profited by the education been educated at the public expense and felt any moral obligation to " enrich the inheritance of the country whose citizens they are ", as some small return for what the country had done for them. There is, therefore, nothing against the public schools, other than that they are not public.

If these barriers to social unity were removed, could we hope to achieve such unity with the Act as it stands? Ultimately, I think we could do so. Again it would appear that everything would depend upon how seriously we take the promises made in the White Paper. For instance, the school leaving age of 15 operates only from April, 1947, and though the age can be raised to 16 by Order in Council, i.e., at any time when the Minister is satisfied that there are sufficient teachers and school accommodation to justify the step, it is common knowledge that local authorities are being encouraged to contemplate the organisation of county colleges by 1950 and that this policy is being given priority over an extended compulsory age of 16. Two half-days a week in the best county college is no substitute for full-time education up to 16. The ideals so admirably stated in the White Paper contain the germ of a philosophy which is

even more dependent on the content than on the machinery of education, and that extra year to 16 followed by two years part-time education in the County college, could effectively have laid the foundation of all that the White Paper suggests the education service should provide in our national life. But even this would be subject to what might be called the prelude and the epilogue to education, viz., the compulsory organisation of an adequate nursery school system, and a much more generous conception of the importance of adult education. It is in these two aspects of education that social unity has been achieved, due to the fact that they both inculcate the spirit of co-operation, mutual aid, self-government and personal responsibility. Of that more will be said later. In the meantime, there are other barriers to social unity. " No teacher, however competent, can see to the development of an indidivual child's *innate* potentialities, or foster in it a healthy development of mind, body and character, if she has to deal single-handed with a class of 50 small children. This is not education, but mass production ". I take no credit for sentiments so ably expressed. They are not my words. They are from the White Paper. No education act was necessary to reduce the size of classes, and it was unnecessary to include express provision in the Act itself. The end can be achieved by a simple administrative circular from the Ministry or even by the voluntary action of local education authorities themselves.

Whether priority in reducing the size of classes should have preference over raising the school age has been argued with vigour, and there are convincing arguments in favour of it, but the strongest argument is in favour of planning for both simultaneously. This pre-supposes that extraordinary, even revolutionary steps, are being taken to secure sufficient teachers and adequate school accom-

modation for such a simultaneous reform, but with the utmost desire to be charitable to a harrassed Minister and hard pressed officials, one can hardly feel that the rate of progress in the emergency training scheme for teachers and the equipment of schools for their new tasks, has had the priority which the urgency of the problem demanded.

There has been no real assessment of the damage inflicted on education during the war. Horrifying as the statistics were in regard to the size of classes in 1938, the position at the end of the war must have been infinitely worse. The nearest estimate of the effect of long evacuation of school children, of overcrowding in schools and of the closure of schools with long periods of non-attendance, is best understood by an authoritative statement, the source of which cannot be quoted because it was given in confidence, that twenty-two per cent of the adolescents of army age (who were the school children of the blitz period) are found to be semi-illiterate, the test being that their reading and writing capacity is equal only to that of the 12-year-old school boy.

The public mind has never grasped the significance of these seven lean years in education. How little it has done so is shown by a Gallup Poll taken by the *News Chronicle* where those taking part were invited to express their views on the order of priority in reconstruction.

Education came at the foot of the list with only 2 per cent votes. It is, of course, natural, that Housing, Full Employment and Social Security should be well represented as high priorities. They are urgent problems, but the disturbing feature of the poll was the obvious trend toward counting as priorities, those which conferred privileges, and assuming as of little importance anything which involved responsibility. A short term view would place Full Employment at the head of priorities. On a

long-term view one would ask how can you maintain full employment and make social security an economically sound proposition without education.

Thus we are faced with the dilemma that few of the children now in school can hope to reap any substantial benefit from the education act because of the time lag required for its operation, while their parents, except for a small minority, are so little aware of the social implications of education to the crisis in national and international affairs that they consider it one of the last of the services calling for priority. This is a dilemma we must face. Nor need we adopt a too pessimistic attitude if we make the most of the material ready for genuine secondary school opportunities and if we are really prepared to treat adult education as a matter of such vital importance that every barrier to its wide extension is removed.

The modern secondary school has been in existence just long enough to pay its first dividend. Any one who has had the opportunity of meeting and discussing current problems with the senior forms of the modern secondary school must have been impressed with the high intellectual standard of the pupils, with their broad, objective approach to controversial questions and their liberal toleration of the unpopular minority view. They provide the most intelligent audience, offer the most convincing evidence of what is possible by a liberal education and leave one confident that democracy will be infinitely richer when they form the backbone of the adult generation. Unfortunately, they are so few in number. How soon can we extend such opportunities to all our children ? The Act provides for free secondary education for all and while the White Paper visualised " three main types of secondary schools, to be known as grammar, modern and technical schools ", no such classification appears in the Act itself. This is all to the good. Any rigid classi-

fication narrowing the functions of secondary education would be unfortunate. In the main, for some years to come most local authorities will roughly follow the pattern of the three types because such types already exist, but it is worthy of note that the London County Council Education Authority has definitely decided to base its scheme of secondary education on the multilateral system, which means combining on one "campus" all the varying aspects of secondary education and the annual conference of the W.E.A. in 1945 declared in favour of the same principle. There is opportunity for immense experiment in secondary education. It is possible that the multilateral school will provide variety of choice while relating the varying aspects of secondary education to each other. The main point, however, is to secure parity between all types of secondary education.

The most fatal blunder any local education authority could make is to perpetuate the idea that the grammar school should cream off all the bright children from the primary school and that the less bright should be divided between the technical and modern school. To avoid this, the Surrey Education Committee has decided to transfer all children at 11 plus to the secondary school in their own area and to decide at 13, on the basis of the aptitude and abilities of the children, as shown by their school records and reports, and after taking into consideration the wishes of the parent, what type of secondary school is most appropriate.

The grammar schools have not received this proposal with enthusiasm, but to the credit of the L.E.A. it has refused to compromise and has taken the first step toward placing the technical and modern schools on a parity of esteem with the grammar school. Whether the age of transfer should be 11 or 13 has been debated. It seems to those capable of judging that the Surrey Committee is

providing the best of both worlds for children who will be guaranteed a common secondary school opportunity up to 13 and a specialised selected opportunity from that age.

The final criterion of the value of secondary education, however, is less a matter of administrative machinery, than of environment and content. The children must be impressed with their cultural surroundings if they are to respect or benefit by the education they receive. It will not be good enough simply to label our central and senior schools, "Secondary Schools" and flatter ourselves we have carried out our obligations. We may have to improvise for a few years but there should be a long term plan for making every school a centre so admirable in equipment and amenities, as to inspire the aesthetic taste of the children and give them a standard of values capable of enabling them to judge between the shoddy and artificial and the false and the true. We under-rate the importance of observation in education, but it is the personal impression which encourages judgment based upon our own experience.

When we return, however, to the role which education must play in developing a sense of social unity, we find that neither machinery nor school environment, however perfect, are sufficient in themselves. As the White Paper says, " Laws cannot build better human beings and it is not the machinery of education so much as the content which will count in the future."

We have a positive policy in the teaching of every subject but the subject of citizenship. Even on the subject of religion, the most controversial and difficult of all subjects we are dogmatic in the denominational schools or we compromise on an " agreed syllabus " in the council schools. In both cases there is a body of doctrine. Yet there are those who argue that citizenship cannot be

taught in the schools, it is something which depends upon maturity and experience of life, so we wait until most people are too old to feel that they have any mission in life and then try to arouse their enthusiasm by periodical election appeals, in which there is usually more heat than light. The fruit of that philosophy is obvious in the apathy of the thirty to fifty per cent who do not trouble at any-time to exercise the franchise and the indecision and casualness of many of those who do.

It is clear that training for living one's life in the community cannot begin too early and ought to be aided by every kind of object lesson inherent in most forms of group association.

If we can construct and supply an agreed syllabus for the teaching of religion, it should be even less difficult to agree upon an effective planned syllabus for the teaching and the *practice* of citizenship in the schools. It is through the voluntary act in corporate citizenship, that we make our contribution to social unity. It is our protection against the demagogue and the dictator, our expression of faith in our ability to govern ourselves and to endow leaders, not with the power which corrupts, but with trusteeship based upon responsibility to the common will.

Sometimes, I find it difficult to believe that one can make the subject of citizenship exciting. It seems to be rather an administrative act than an experience. Placing crosses on a ballot paper is less exciting than working out the normal crossword puzzle, but with the hideous memories, still fresh in our minds, of racial persecution, political intolerance, and the fiendish organisation of concentration camps and extermination squads forcibly used to suppress the finest aspirations and ideals of the human mind, placing crosses on a ballot paper becomes a symbol.

It is a symbol of men who are jealous to preserve freedom, liberty and justice and the extent to which they exercise their privilege, is the extent of their determination that these priceless treasures shall not perish from the earth.

Chapter VIII

THE BRIDGE TO THE NEW SOCIETY— ADULT EDUCATION?

One still feels that we have reached a crisis in human affairs in which long term planning in the schools may be too late to be effective, unless we can concentrate at the same time upon an altogether phenominal increase in the provision of *Adult Education.* If we were living in the tranquil days of peace with nothing to disturb our national unity more serious than the heated controversies between the Tweedledees and Tweedledums and no more serious interlude in international life than a customs union between Albania and Jugoslavia, we might sit back and argue that we would wait for a new generation to arise from our schools, educated to a new standard of social and moral values, and complacently ignore the apathy of the adult generation. Unfortunately, we live in no such tranquil times and few accept the peace as anything but an armistice. Too many people believe that another world war within the next few years is inevitable. War is only inevitable when sufficient people are convinced it is so.

We must provide an answer to this cynicism, this age when men have lost their faith in religion, in politics, and are finding no other anchorage or philosophy from which to draw inspiration. At its roots, this loss of faith, is the loss of faith in ourselves and our cynicism a cover for our own inferiority complex.

Adult education, however, is not a philosophy in itself. It is the means by which men and women discover the multiplicity of interests in life, and follow those which bring them most satisfaction.

Roughly speaking, their interests fall into three main

streams, the recreational the practical and what for want of a better term, we call the academic or cultural.

The recreational covers interests such as hobbies, dancing and exercise, particularly physical training. The practical interests are mainly concerned with instruction which may be vocational, recreational or cultural, but will be related in the main to doing things and learning by practice rather than by exposition and discussion.

The local education authorities provide most for the demand for recreational and practical interests, and the last statistical report of the Ministry of Education, showing the subjects of instruction provided in evening institutes and colleges, seems to be that for 1938. According to this report, there were, in round figures, 2,800,000 class entries. Considerably over half the total entries were in professional, industrial and commercial subjects and therefore represented occupational and vocational interests. The rest were divided between Home Nursing, Domestic and Physical training, English and Foreign languages, with some 200,000 entries for such cultural subjects as practical art and musical training.

Out of the whole total, only just over 30,000 entries were directly related to subjects coming within the sphere of the social and moral sciences.

No one would wish to dispute the immense contribution which the evening institutes are making to the further education of the citizen. That the overwhelming demand is for utilitarian and practical subjects which will give the citizen a better market in industrial or professional life is not only legitimate but of vital importance to the industrial and commercial prosperity of the Nation. The unsettling feature is not that the citizen is interested in engineering or mathematics. It is, that he has so few wider interests, that he is so little concerned about his interests as a citizen and that he still views education for

a living as an end in itself. And he is encouraged to believe that he is participating in adult education by "educationalists" who urge, with oratorical fervour, at innumerable conferences, that any activity which absorbs the leisure time of the adult is adult education, and that those who plead for priority of consideration for student movements which are actuated by a clear standard of intellectual values and directed by a definite social aim and purpose are only concerned to maintain a vested interest in their own Simon Puritanism. The meagre demand for subjects associated with the social functions of citizenship, by comparison with interest in recreational and utilitarian subjects, is understandable and due to many causes. One could almost prepare a catalogue listing them. The most important are, absence of incentive to social awareness in the curriculum of the normal school life, and the over emphasis upon the utilitarian conception of education, the preference of some local education authorities, happily growing less in number who only encourage recreational and practical subjects on the grounds that such subjects cannot lead to what the Japanese call "dangerous thinking".[1] It would be grossly unfair, however, to apply this criticism to any but an insignificant number of authorities today, and for the changed outlook the Workers' Educational Association, which has inspired confidence by its objective methods, can take considerable credit.

Other important contributory factors are, the modern "phobia for 'counting heads'", and concentrating upon the provision of mental comfort rather than mental stimulus and, finally, and most important of all, the mania for creating such elaborate "consultative and co-ordina-

[1] From a press report in 1945, an L.E.A. in Scotland refused to recognise a class in Philosophy on the grounds that it would lead to political discussion.

ing " machinery for adult education that its fine spirit of voluntary effort and missionary zeal is in danger of being suffocated. What we have to guard against is that a *movement* which has always been recognised as possessing unlimited moral and spiritual potentialities does not become a " service ", unemotional and impersonal, and entirely professional in character.

The picture of interest in sociological studies can only be completed, however, if one takes account of the contribution which is being made by the universities and voluntary bodies, particularly the W.E.A. In all the universities and university colleges there are joint committees on which the university and the W.E.A. (and in some areas) the local authorities, have tripartite representation. These Committees are responsible for the supervision of work at the university level, mainly organised by W.E.A. branches, while the W.E.A. organises and provides many more of its own classes. On these sections of the picture alone, there were, in 1945–46, over 5,000 classes with nearly 100,000 students, studying subjects of non-vocational character, the main interests being on the broad aspects of national and international reconstruction, social, economic and political.

The final test of any aspect of adult education must be the contribution it makes to the development of the character and personality of those who participate in it. In the words of the W.E.A. statement of policy, " it does not seek to persuade students into the acceptance of any particular theory, but to enable them to obtain the information and intellectual training, by means of which they can judge for themselves and thus develop the critical and constructive faculty essential in a democratic society ". Hence the claim that of all aspects of adult education, a positive education in citizenship is the most vital need of a society, not yet fully conscious of the

intrinsic values of the democratic way of life, and not fully aware of the danger of ideologies which still threaten its freedom and independence.

The problem is how to multiply and expand the demand for this approach to adult education. There is no question of competition with any other aspect of adult education, either recreational or occupational. Indeed, insofar as recreation contributes to health and well spent leisure, and occupational interests produce higher skills in craftsmanship, both may make a direct contribution to citizenship, but such interests fit in equally as well the mood of a dictatorship as that of a democracy. So long as citizenship was passive it was not obnoxious to the Nazi regime. It was only when education provided the social incentive to active participation in self-government that it became a threat to the Nazi theory of the leadership principle. It was then directed into the channel of Strength through Joy, in this case the avenue of escape from conscience and reality.

Our task is to create a sufficiently strong bulwark against mass apathy to ensure that democracy is not only enshrined in the hearts and minds of the people, but that it becomes the instrument for building our national and international relationships and institutions. That bulwark can only be created by an altogether unprecedented increase in the demand for adult education and a sufficient conception of its urgency to ensure unstinting public financial and moral support for the bodies which organise the demand.

Adult education, being a voluntary effort, evokes no spontaneous demand. The demand has to be stimulated. The easy assumption that the demand will automatically arise if the facilities are available and are there in sufficient variety, displayed so to speak in the shop window, is disproved by long experience.

How then, can we stimulate the demand? The new Education Act places a special responsibility upon local education authorities. It emphasises their responsibility for surveying the area in which they work and in consultation with the University body and the voluntary bodies concerned, submitting plans for development to the Ministry of Education.

This does not mean that the local authority assumes full responsibility for organisation, provision and administration of adult education, but it ought to mean that they should treat its development as a matter of vital importance. So far as the recreational and occupational aspects of adult education are concerned the L.E.A. is the most effective instrument and even where voluntary bodies come into the picture in the organising functions, the L.E.A. is usually called upon to make the provision.

The problem of what has been called citizenship education, in subjects lending themselves to exposition and discussion, is rather different. Here are subjects, often of a highly controversial character, and if a public authority were involved in the teaching, it might feel compelled to make limiting conditions or lay down regulations, to protect itself from criticism both within its own Council and outside. Universities and organisations such as the W.E.A. have a long tradition of experience in teaching, which most authorities respect, and the system of co-operation by which the Ministry and the local authorities give grant aid and make the universities and the recognised voluntary bodies responsible for preserving objectivity of approach and reasonable standards of teaching is the best guarantee of the freedom so essential to the development of this form of adult education.

But that is not the only reason, or even the main reason why the local authority should place confidence in the

voluntary movement. If this special aspect of adult education is to bear fruit it must be based on a permanent movement which can find an outlet for the social activities of its students. It must have roots in something wider than the group, which meets to serve a temporary, common interest. When that common interest has been served the group disintegrates unless it has a movement behind it which ensures a continutity of effort and a regular intake of new students and new interests.

One of the fallacies of the modern trend in adult education is to believe that if there are sufficient organising tutors working for some distant adult education committee they can be sent out into the world and will gather round themselves a body of faithful disciples forming a "student movement" quite independent of any organised voluntary movement. The organising tutors who have been the victims of such experiments would be the first to admit that a movement built on personal loyalties is apt to become too enduring to be tolerable or too fickle to be reliable, and that in any case there is nothing to be said in favour of a system in which the class disappears at the end of each session or, what is worse, develops into a permanent and exclusive mutual admiration society. Where there is no organised voluntary movement of citizens, interested in the education of public opinion as well as following their own particular educational interest, most tutors have found it necessary to encourage its development. Further, a voluntary organisation such as the W.E.A. believes that what is called the consumer must express his needs through a movement in which he has confidence. It is a movement of his own creation and through active participation in its branch, district and national meetings and conferences, the individual student may assist in developing educational policy instead of having it imposed upon him, and the organisation which

represents his needs must be a fellowship genuinely democratic and free from the condescending patronage of social uplift enthusiasts.

The really important factor in a wide and extensive development of adult education is a basis for frank and genuine co-operation between the local education authorities, the universities and the voluntary providing bodies. It is not a question of committee machinery, but willingness to appreciate that each one of the three partners has a particular sphere in which it excels.

The place of the university is clear. It is to minister to the intellectual needs of serious students. Its business is not to minister to popular taste, but to cultivate it by work of a character compatible with university standards. This means something more than providing tutors of high academic standard. It means seeking out students who have a quality of intellect and experience worthy of the tutor.

It may be argued of course that the universities have also a responsibility for reaching far wider numbers than in the past. Of course, they have. There need be no limits to their horizon. In the field of the civil service and the local government and the welfare services alone, they have an immense responsibility for planning and providing the background for more efficient and better informed public service for those who cannot take internal courses. The universities should be able to offer seminar opportunities to groups of four to six of the outstanding students in the thousands of classes organised by voluntary bodies, providing some individual tuition for such students. They ought to be doing far more in providing training courses for prospective tutors. In all cases their contribution should be measured by quality of achievement rather than quantity.

It is fitting that the L.E.A.s should be made responsible

for surveying their own areas and submitting schemes for development. They have a wide responsibility for pro-provision, especially for recreational and cultural opportunities. But there are foundations to be laid first, and the most effective contribution which L.E.A.s can make in the next few years is to provide an *environment* which will make adult education attractive.

The conditions under which adult classes have had to meet have all too often been deplorable. One sign of the rising standard of culture is the revolt against meeting week after week in infant classrooms often badly lit and uncomfortably cold and with nothing but infant desks or hard backless forms to sit on. One can only admire the interest and enthusiasm of students who, in spite of these conditions maintain a regular attendance. The facts are too well known to need repetition.

There are magnificient dreams of civic centres under a variety of names such as educational institutes, community centres and citizen clubs. The name is immaterial. What is important is to plan the amenities which are necessary. They should include quiet rooms for study, furnished with easy chairs and modern furniture, a lecture hall with tip-up upholstered seats with stage and equipment for drama, music and films, a canteen and a common room for informal discussions and a library. Where possible, the public library should be part of the same building. The greatest single contribution to the extension of adult education is to provide an environment of culture in which it can flourish. But we shall have to wait for these ideal halls of culture. In the meantime, L.E.A.s can assist development by taking over and placing at the disposal of voluntary bodies engaged in adult education, residential houses, often vacant because of the capital outlay involved by modernising or turning into flats, and also by planning when building new

schools, or re-equipping existing schools, small rooms furnished and equipped for adults. In the rural areas, it is hoped that many county authorities will experiment with village colleges, serving all the villages within a reasonable radius.

The question of *residential education* has been very much in the public eye, due, largely, to the stimulating advocacy of Sir Richard Livingstone in his *Future in Education*. Universities, Local Education Authorities and Voluntary bodies have projects in mind for Residential Colleges, most of them providing short, intensive courses, ranging from one week to two months. So far as one can estimate, there are something like twenty-five colleges in an embryo state.

Whether the ground will be as thickly covered as Sir Richard Livingstone advocated will depend very largely upon the attitude of the employers. The chief difficulty will be finding students who can be released from employment for short periods, and given financial assistance, where necessary, to attend the courses. If employers can be persuaded that such opportunities are a good investment, not only providing refresher courses for workers, but giving them a more intelligent appreciation of life and of their social responsibilities then there is some hope of an expansion of colleges, but unless the co-operation of employers can be guaranteed, bodies will not be prepared to incur heavy capital risk on colleges which remain empty for the greater part of the year. In any case, residential education should not be looked upon as introductory courses for generating adult educational interest. That interest ought to have been developed in private study, or class activity, before the student goes to the residential college, otherwise the standard of work in the colleges is not going to justify the expense of maintaining them.

One would like to see L.E.As experimenting, in co-

operation with such bodies as the W.E.A., in providing residential colleges for *youth education* for age groups 17 to 21, and providing scholarships for 3-month courses in Citizenship. That would be a far more remunerative effort in terms of a real social dividend than anything yet attempted.

There can, however, be no expansion of adult education if it is viewed as a luxury for a negligible number of people, and the finance allotted to it, measured accordingly. No section of our social services has had to go round with the hat, collecting little bits and pieces from so many sources, as adult education. We are often exhorted to learn something from war experiments in adult education. The most impressive lesson we have learned is that, with the object of strengthening the morale of the men and women in the services we could budget for an expenditure on army education of stupendous proportions in comparison with anything we have been prepared to spend on civilian adult education. The justification may have been that the crisis of the period demanded it. The obvious conclusion is that an imaginative investment on the same scale in civilian life today, may mean the prevention of such similar crises in the future.

We cannot envisage an expansion of adult education without consideration of the character of the facilities which are available. Are they sufficient to cover the uncultivated field ? The demand for subjects varies according to the stresses of modern life. In one period interest grows in sociological subjects, in another cultural. It is a tribute to the variety of facilities offered that we seldom find a demand for subjects entirely outside the field of what is available.

On the other hand, is there room for revision and variety in the method of presentation ? It is sometimes argued that the approach by the recognised method is too

academic, and that we have been too reliant upon the lecture and discussion method of the formal class. New methods have been tried during the war, or perhaps one should say, old methods have been tried under special conditions.

The most publicised has been A.B.C.A., the Army Bureau of Current Affairs, which promoted a study pamphlet, circulated it to army units and secured its fairly wide acceptance for a compulsory session at regular intervals for reading and discussion under the guidance of an officer detailed for the purpose. The second most publicised method was the Discussion Group, mainly associated with Civil Defence. In this case, pamphlet study material of a somewhat elementary type was issued by a department of the Home Office ! Strange as it may seem, the spirit of national unity was so strong that it was not disturbed even by the unusual spectacle of the Home Office undertaking the joint functions of war-time security and war-time education at the same time !

The principle common to all these " war time experiments " was that they depended upon a circulated " text " or leadership material, and that they made no pretence that the " leader " need necessarily know anything about the subject. He had his book of words, and underlined passages in his text provided the questions which it was hoped might provoke discussion.

As a war-time emergency, carried on among men and women browned off by boredom and forced to close group association, these experiments were worth trying out and might have had considerable effect in stimulating *permanent* educational interest, with skilled leaders qualified to deal with the subjects under discussion, and capable of persuading the " students " to read as well as to talk. Short courses were arranged to " train discussion group leaders ", but leading discussion groups is not a matter

of being supplied with a bag of tricks. It is a question of possessing background and knowledge of the subject under discussion. There is considerable scope for the discussion group method as an informal introduction to study. It is as old as Socrates but, as in his day, it can only be sustained by leaders who inspire the confidence of the group by their knowledge of the subject.

It has been argued that something has been accomplished if we can start men talking and that it does not matter what they talk about or how inadequately they express themselves. But the world is not short of people who can talk, it is really short of those who know what they are talking about. That is why the W.E.A. always discourages classes in public speaking, and urges the importance of studying the *subjects* on which one desires to speak in public. The student will learn to express himself in the course of his studies. If he has not mastered the subject, his silence will be more eloquent than his speeches, whether in private or in public.

All this suggests that "popularising" adult education is not a question of an academic or a non-academic approach. It is a question of providing competent leadership at the intellectual level of the student group and of avoiding the danger of placing an inexperienced leader or tutor in charge of an inexperienced group. On the contrary, the more backward the group the more qualified should be the tutor.

Two aspects of A.B.C.A. work most likely to give valuable assistance in developing interest in adult education are, the use of the illustrative material, particularly the map and chart, and for developing an initial interest, the dramatic presentation of subject matter in the form of well-acted plays. This dramatic method is a genuine technique and has immense possibilities.

The Bureau of Current Affairs, the civilian equivalent

to A.B.C.A., is the most appropriate body to cultivate and extend it, and could render a special service to the Adult Education movement by placing a dramatised service at its disposal.

The other methods of presentation are, of course, the *wireless* and the *film*. It is difficult to estimate their influence on public opinion because both are subject to such changing moods. They can inspire us or dope us, arouse our deepest spiritual emotions or lacerate them, refine our morals or coarsen them, present us with a picture or disgust us with a caricature. In short, they possess immense power for good or evil.

On the whole, the wireless, being less commercialised, has been more free to follow a conscious policy of enlightening public opinion. It has had an enormous influence in developing an appreciation of the arts, especially music and the drama. The B.B.C. has, in fact developed an educational service of the highest importance and, while the organised "listening group" did not fulfil expectations, the material had a far wider audience than the groups themselves. In fact, the listening group movement could have become a more noteworthy development had it been possible to provide a sufficient variety of subjects each week.

The main role of broadcasting in adult education will always be to diffuse knowledge over an extensive area. It is an instrument for mass education, and its service is so vital to the development of adult education that it ought to be more closely related to the adult education bodies in the field. The B.B.C. has now built up an efficient production technique. It knows how to present a case to the million, but it has never effectively used the experience of those who work in the field of adult education, in the matter of the content of adult education. It could provide an enormous impetus by bringing together

its technical producers and the organising bodies especially if it gave the various bodies the freedom of the air occasionally. For instance, if the Brains Trust could on occasions be composed of specialists on one particular subject, and the whole time were devoted to exploring that one subject, this feature could become one of the most significant contributions to adult education.

The place of the *film* is less certain. As the adult education movement develops, it should influence public taste, and that should influence the box office. Indeed, there has been a remarkable improvement in recent years, not only in technical production but in the character of the films which have a box office attraction. The most popular film in recent years, Henry V, would probably have been rejected by most film distributors twenty years ago, as a risky financial venture. The primary purpose of the cinema, however, is to entertain and to provide opportunity for relaxation and escape from the stresses of life, but neither the entertainment value nor the physical and mental value of relaxation are thwarted by refusing to make or exhibit films which are vulgar, coarse and debasing. We have no right to expect the film in a public cinema to provide an entrance to the classroom, any more than it should encourage entrance to the brothel. It may be, that if public taste continues to improve, local authorities may find scope for municipal cinemas as in Oslo, or State cinemas as in Prague and provide for those interested in the artistic and cultural values of the film, a service such as the Arts Council is providing for those interested in music and drama.

The development of visual education is still in its infancy, though considerable use was made of documentary films and film strips in instructional centres during the war, and the Ministry of Information, after a shaky start, produced many notable films which had the

merit of providing good entertainment of ourstanding educational value. Unfortunately, film production involves considerable capital outlay and for the kind of film required by educational organisations and schools, we need a central clearing house for distribution, a joint council of producers and consumer bodies to plan production, and considerable vision on the part of the Ministry of Education in regard to the financial needs of a service, which, could make a magnificent contribution to the extension of interest in adult education, and in training for citizenship.

I have deliberately restricted myself to rather narrow terms of reference, because the subject of adult education covers a field so vast and varied that I should have had to write a second volume to this book to deal adequately with all the problems within the range of one's experience.

Academic problems, however, are not so urgent and we can discuss them at our leisure. The central problem is that of urgency. The important fact is that we are not keeping pace with national and world events, which, as the Rt. Hon. J. C. Smuts reminded us in a broadcast at the end of September, 1946 :

> " are sweeping us along and unless we hurry we may be overwhelmed in the storm. How grave that situation already is, is made only too clear by the development of such as the atomic and the flying bombs and bacteriological warfare weapons no less terrible. What hope have we of saving civilisation, indeed our race itself, from destruction, if we cannot force the pace and build protecting walls against international war and all that it means ? "

It is not a question of persuading everybody to talk about the atomic bomb. Perhaps there has been too much discussion about it already. The task before us is to create a ferment in the minds of men which will make them alive to the need for their active participation in

creating a new society and for equipping themselves for the task. There are no ready made formulas. What we have to do is to discover new values. It is an exciting quest. It means finding a common philosophy which will lead to a desire for social unity. We start our quest endowed with a heritage of social values common to most genuine democracies, but specially unique in British character, and during recent years, the British way of life. Thus, there is a reverence for human personality and respect for the legitimate rights of the individual. We believe in the freedom of speech, the freedom of the press and of religion, and that all men are equal before the law. Toleration is practised, social justice is the ideal to which we move and oppression is abominated. These values are not, of course, the only contribution we ought to make to civilisation, but they are just the values which have been destroyed in many countries in Europe, and until *they are universally recognised* there will be " no protecting wall against international war ".

What is more important is that these priceless values remain our heritage, only so long as they are jealously guarded and the fewer there are to guard them the greater the danger that the " protecting wall " may collapse as it did in Germany, where the people vested their responsibilities and rights in leaders.

Can we then complacently wait for that new generation to arise from our schools of tomorrow, when today the signs of the times suggest that there may be no new generation unless we can inspire the present adult generation with *a more profound sense of social responsibility ?* If one has no house, then housing is the priority problem. If one is unemployed, then full employment transcends all other questions, but if one loses those values which alone make life worth living, then a house becomes a prison and earning a living a means of prolonging an animal existence.

Man is born to something better. He will come into his birthright as he emancipates himself from his prejudices and inhibitions. There is only one way, the recognition that the cultivation of the mind and the character is the best contribution he can make to his own welfare and to that of a new society. "Upon the education of the people of this country the fate of this country depends".

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